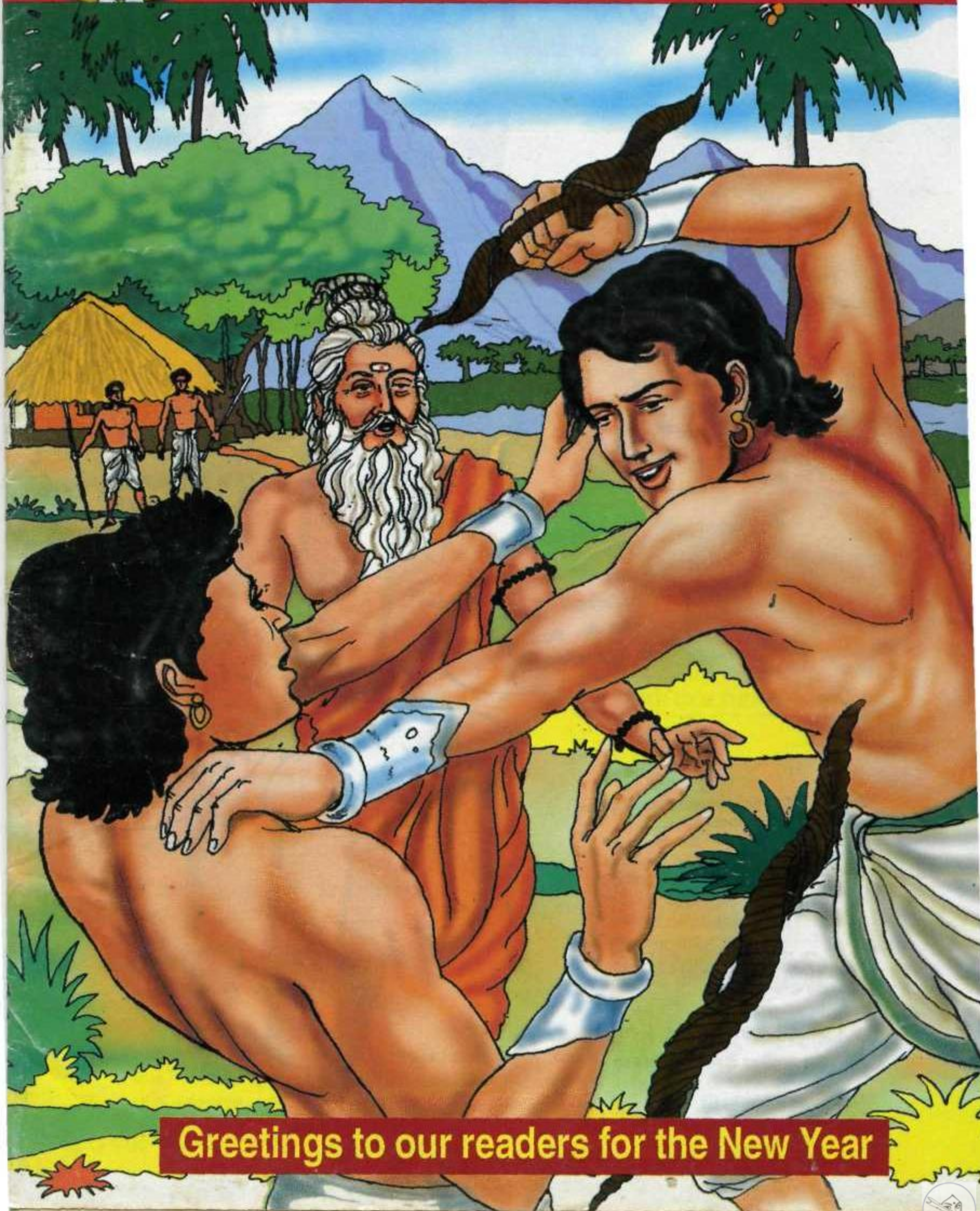


January 2000 - Rs. 10



CHANDAMAMA



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CHANDAMAMA

Vol. 29

January 1999 No. 4

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HIGHLIGHTS

Launching a series which reveals the profundity of the heritage of India.



The Saga of India



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THE GOLDEN THRONE

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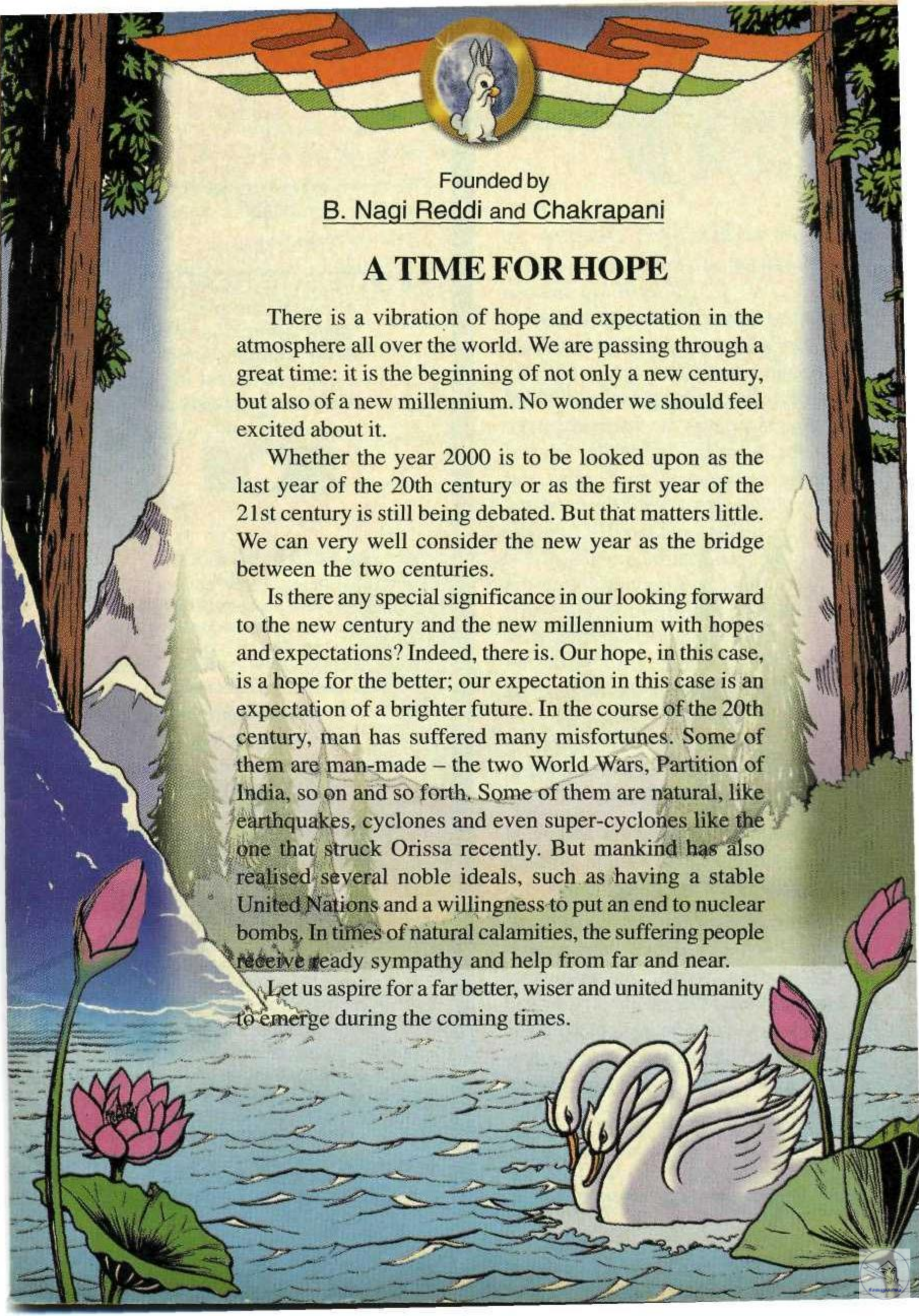
A TIME FOR HOPE

There is a vibration of hope and expectation in the atmosphere all over the world. We are passing through a great time: it is the beginning of not only a new century, but also of a new millennium. No wonder we should feel excited about it.

Whether the year 2000 is to be looked upon as the last year of the 20th century or as the first year of the 21st century is still being debated. But that matters little. We can very well consider the new year as the bridge between the two centuries.

Is there any special significance in our looking forward to the new century and the new millennium with hopes and expectations? Indeed, there is. Our hope, in this case, is a hope for the better; our expectation in this case is an expectation of a brighter future. In the course of the 20th century, man has suffered many misfortunes. Some of them are man-made – the two World Wars, Partition of India, so on and so forth. Some of them are natural, like earthquakes, cyclones and even super-cyclones like the one that struck Orissa recently. But mankind has also realised several noble ideals, such as having a stable United Nations and a willingness to put an end to nuclear bombs. In times of natural calamities, the suffering people receive ready sympathy and help from far and near.

Let us aspire for a far better, wiser and united humanity to emerge during the coming times.



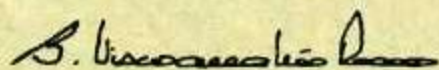


THANK YOU THE FOURTH ESTATE!

The news of the reappearance of *Chandamama* was no doubt a delight for the young and that was only expected, but what gave us an added reassurance was the warm coverage of the event by the media. Several major newspapers, in English and other languages, carried the good tide to their readers and the BBC and the Doordarshan Metro (*Aaj Tak* of TV Today) telecast interviews with the publishers highlighting the spirit behind the publication—which is to familiarise the young with the different aspects of the heritage of India through tales, legends, quizzes, and other features, while inspiring them to enter the new millennium with a faith in the future.

We thank the media and wish them a bon voyage into the new era along with *Chandamama*.

Simultaneously, we wish the same to our numerous readers and would-be readers, writers, distributors, agents, and other collaborators and well-wishers who reiterated their support to the publication as soon as the news of its re-launch reached them.



— Publisher

Creative Contests

CHANDAMAMA INVITES ITS READERS

to participate in creative exercises of their imaginativeness and quest in the following fields.



PHOTO CAPTION CONTEST

1. For the Photo-caption contest page, budding photographers can send a pair of pictures, both related to each other in some way. The photographer's own explanation of the relationship must accompany the submission.

For the selected photographs (pair),
the reward is Rs. 500.

Photos can be submitted any time.



2. Readers can submit an anecdote or an experience of their own or a story (old or new) which will explain a proverb or a phrase announced by your magazine, in 150-175 words. Please remember that your submission must have a story element in it, but not the original story from which the proverb is derived.

**The proverb for the present is:
"The grapes are sour".**

For the selected submission, the reward is
Rs. 500 will be given.

**Submissions must reach by the end of
January 2000 and the winning piece will be
published in the April 2000 issue.**

Address your entries to:

CHANDAMAMA CREATIVE CONTESTS,

CHANDAMAMA BUILDING, VADAPALANI, CHENNAI-600026

— Editor

BORN

THIS MONTH

The young graduate from Calcutta University, who was studying law, often met Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa. But some of those who heard him put questions to the great Master might have thought that there was no hope of the young man growing wiser ever! For his questions were not necessarily on spiritual matters; they were rather materialistic and argumentative in nature.

Little did they know that their Master's Grace could change the young man into a spiritual prophet—that Narendranath Dutta could become the celebrated Swami Vivekananda.

Vivekananda

was born in a middle class family on 12 January, 1863. After becoming a disciple of Sri Ramakrishna, he turned an ascetic. But he was an ascetic who did not ignore the ignorant human beings, the society, or the country or the humanity, but who saw in them a sleeping god.

After Sri Ramakrishna's passing away in 1886, Vivekananda visited America in 1893. At Chicago he spoke at a conference of religious faiths of the world. His exposition of the basic Indian philosophy, Vedanta, at once won the hearts of his audience. From America

he went to England. In both the countries a number of men and women became his disciples.

He founded the famous Ramakrishna Mission and toured India inspiring

thousands of people, mostly the youth, to the ideal of serving India. He wrote several books on Yoga—revealing the great discoveries made by the genius of India, regarding the purpose of human life.

Swami Vivekananda passed away in 1902, when he

was not even 40 years, but left behind a death-defying tradition.

Words of Swami Vivekananda:

"Education is not the amount of information that is put into your brain and runs riot there, undigested, all your life. We must have life-building, man-making, character-making assimilation of ideas. If you have assimilated five ideas and made them your life and character, you have more education than any man who has got by heart a whole library."

SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

The Voice of India's Resurgence

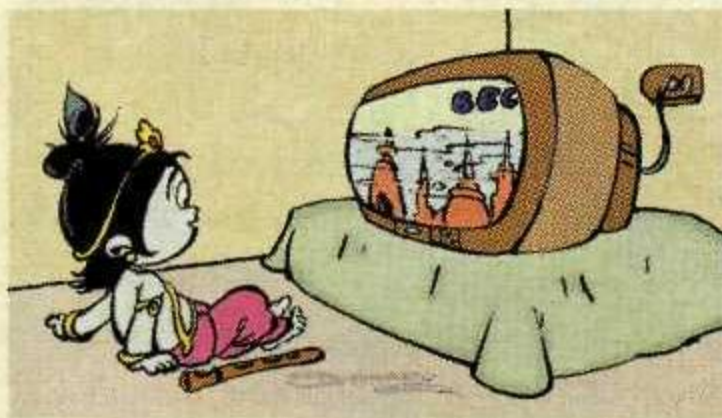


NEWS FLASH

SIGNALS FROM THE SUBMERGED DWARAKA

According to mythology, Dwaraka (in Gujarat) was a city founded by Sri Krishna. Soon after the founder's passing away, the city was submerged.

Dr. R.S. Rao, the doyen of Indian Marine Archaeology who has devoted years in excavation at the legendary site, says that Sri Krishna's city was built on the ruins of Kushasthali, an ancient island, three thousand and seven hundred years ago. But after only one



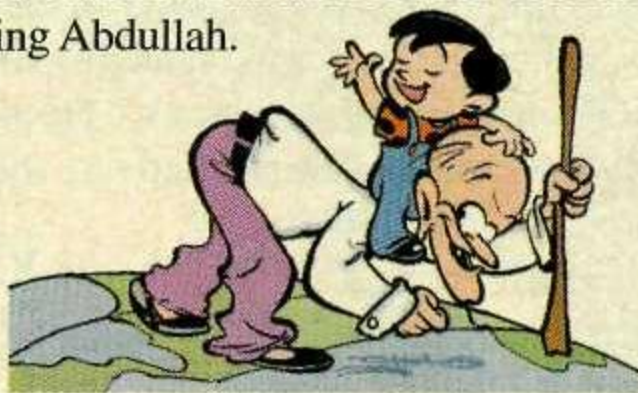
hundred years it was swallowed up by the sea. But Sri Krishna had arranged for the evacuation of the people a week before the catastrophe struck. According to Dr. Rao, in building Dwaraka Sri Krishna used a land reclamation technology which is in vogue even today.

The excavation at Dwaraka has been suspended because of lack of funds. The BBC will film the entire project shortly.

THE OLDEST WALKER

Gharir, a Jordanian who died at the age of 128, walked "everywhere". He walked till his last days.

But in his youth he had raced horses and camels with the founder of Jordan, King Abdullah.



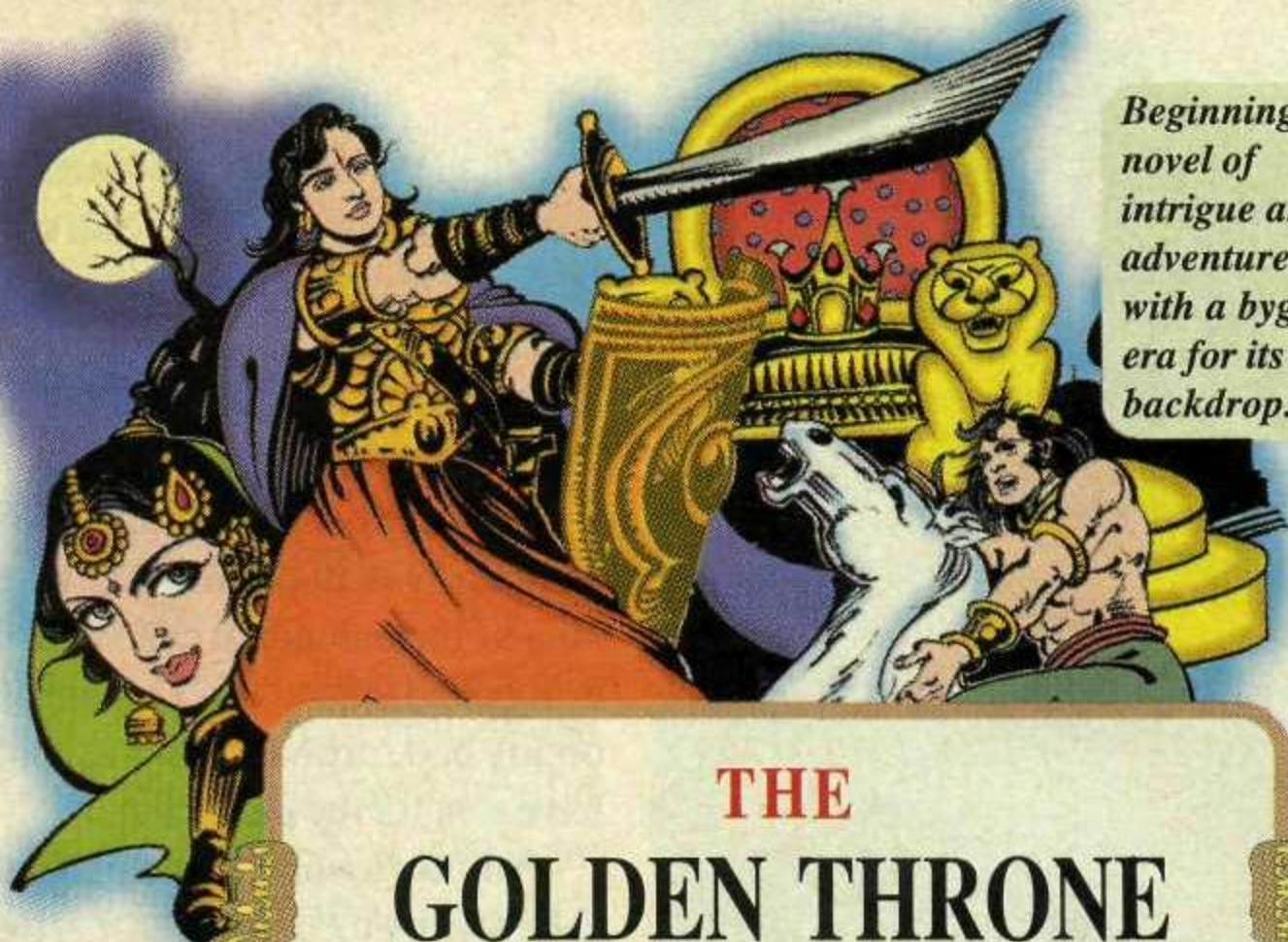
He loved sweet and rich food, but fasted on many days. He leaves behind an army of 128 grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

THE LARGEST CREATURE TO WALK THE EARTH

"It's truly astonishing. It's arguably the largest creature ever to walk the earth," says the expert, Richard Cifelli of Oklahoma University. He headed a team which found remains of a dinosaur in South-eastern Oklahoma which, when alive, must have weighed 60 tons and been



60 feet tall - with the longest neck on record. It could have easily peeped into any sixth floor window. It has been named Sauroposeidon meaning "the god-lizard which shook the earth when it walked"!



Beginning a novel of intrigue and adventure with a bygone era for its backdrop.

THE GOLDEN THRONE

Once upon a time, long ago, the southern part of India had four great kingdoms - Kaundinya, Kalindi, Champaka and Kunda. Then there were six smaller principalities too.

Once the throne of Kaundinya was adorned by Pourasvata, a brave and clever prince, belonging to the Hyhaya dynasty. Through war or through diplomacy, he brought all the other three kingdoms under his authority. Thereby he became the emperor.

The mighty emperor, however, had no children. His nephew, Hayagreeva, succeeded him to the throne after his death.

Hayagreeva was gentle and kind, but he did not possess the valour and skill of his uncle. Luckily for him, he had

a wise teacher, Pulinda Bhattaraka, who guided him in all matters.

Pulinda, indeed, was a great scholar and a man of sound conscience. He had studied statecraft as well as the science of mantra. On a visit to Varanasi, King Pourasvata had met him and had been deeply impressed by him. At the king's invitation, the scholar came over to Kaundinya to take charge of the young prince's education. Pulinda took an instant liking for the prince and took great care of the boy. Upon ascending the throne, Hayagreeva made him the Rajguru, for the old Rajguru had just died.

Pulinda understood the weakness and innocence of Hayagreeva. He also knew that the young king was conscious

1. The Unexpected Conspiracy



of his own shortcomings himself and that is why often felt depressed. Pulinda was determined to see that the king grew more illustrious than even his great predecessor, Poursavata.

Alas, man proposes, but God disposes.

One day Hayagreeva was out in the forest for hunting. He had with him only a few bodyguards. He saw a spotted deer and got down from his horse and shot his arrow at it. But it missed his target. The deer ran away at a lightning speed.

King Hayagreeva heard a suppressed laughter behind him. There was mockery in that laughter. He looked back. His bodyguards looked as serious as ever. But he understood that he had been reduced to an object

of ridicule. The bodyguards must have wondered how can he rule an empire if he could not hunt even a deer!

He mounted his horse and, without a word, galloped towards his palace. The surprised bodyguards followed him.

On the next day, in the morning, Pulinda was in meditation when the king's chief attendant called out to him in a choked voice. "Sir! The king is lying on his bed, probably in a swoon. We have sent for the physician."

Pulinda rushed to the palace, only to be told by the physician that the king had died! Soon thereafter, Pulinda was handed over a small ivory box. His servant told him that it had been sent to him by the king when he sat in meditation.

Pulinda opened it and read the brief letter it contained. It was the last thing the king had written. He had narrated the incident during his hunting. That had suddenly made him believe that he had become an object of ridicule for everybody. Hence he was bidding goodbye to him and the world!

Pulinda was shocked. His dream of making his dear student a great king was shattered. But there was no time to waste on lamentations. The king had left behind an infant son. He was crowned the king and Pulinda and the ministers tried to rule the empire on his behalf.

But soon there was no empire! Within weeks of King Hayagreeva's



death, the kings of Kalindi, Champaka and Kunda snapped their allegiance to the Hyhaya dynasty. By and by the other six smaller principalities also declared independence. Kundinya was the only domain to be ruled by Hayagreeva's son when he came of age.

Pulinda died of old age.

Time passed.

The glory of the Hyhayas was partly restored during the rule of Sridatta, the tenth king in the dynasty and the fifth after Pourasvata. Not that he reconquered any neighbouring country, but he ruled well and encouraged art, literature and education in his kingdom. His subjects sang his glory enthusiastically. In fact, the other kings grew envious of him.

King Sridatta was young when his wife died soon after giving birth to a son. The king's well-wishers and relatives insisted on his marrying again. But he refused to do so. He divided his attention between administering the kingdom and looking after his son.

The little prince, named Vijaydatta, grew up as an intelligent and refined boy under his father's care. He was then sent to the Gurukul run by Krishnachandra, a sage-like teacher.

Taught by the great teacher, Prince Vijaydatta excelled all the other students at the Gurukul in study as well as physical culture. The teacher was all praise for him.



After completing his regular course of studies, the prince took up lessons in statecraft. A month more and he would return to his kingdom.

Suddenly, a messenger from his father met him one afternoon. He had been urgently summoned. The king had also written to his teacher to allow him to leave the Gurukul.

Both the teacher and the student felt sad. But they knew that only an extraordinary situation would have obliged the king to interrupt the prince's study.

The next morning the prince departed for his kingdom, with the guru's blessings.

The king was already waiting at the



lions' gate of his castle when the prince arrived and bowed to him. The king embraced the bright young man and led him into the palace.

That day, in the afternoon, King Sridatta and Prince Vijaydatta sat in the king's private chamber and the king began: "My son, you must have felt surprised at my summoning you in such a hasty manner!"

"Yes, Father, I am no doubt surprised," said the prince.

The king then narrated the cause of his anxiety:

"Vijay, you are familiar with the history of our dynasty. Emperor Pourasvata subdued all the rulers of this part of India. The kings paid regular tributes to him in the form of gold, diamond and other precious gems. Our treasure increased. By and by the

empire was gone. But the treasure remains practically untouched. The other kings know that we are far more wealthy than them. So far none of them coveted our wealth. But the situation has changed."

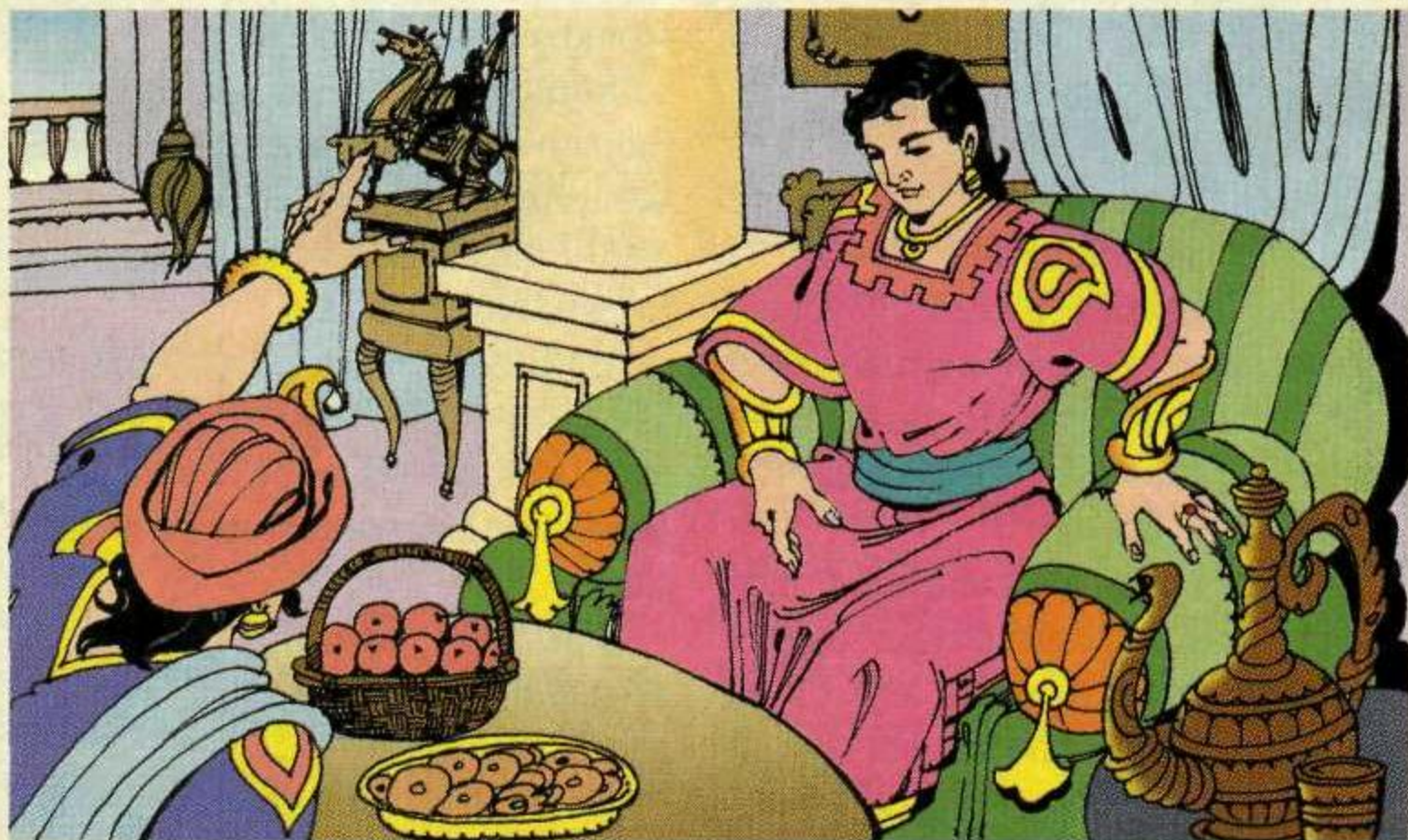
"Is that so? Who has set his greedy eyes on our treasure?" asked the prince.

"Not one, my boy, but all the three rulers of the major kingdoms have conspired to snatch it from us," sadly replied King Sridatta.

Prince Vijaydatta's brows were raised.

"Father! Do you really mean that all the three kings are plotting against us? Am I to understand that even the king of Kalindi is a party to it?" asked the prince.

"Alas, my boy, the king of Kalindi is



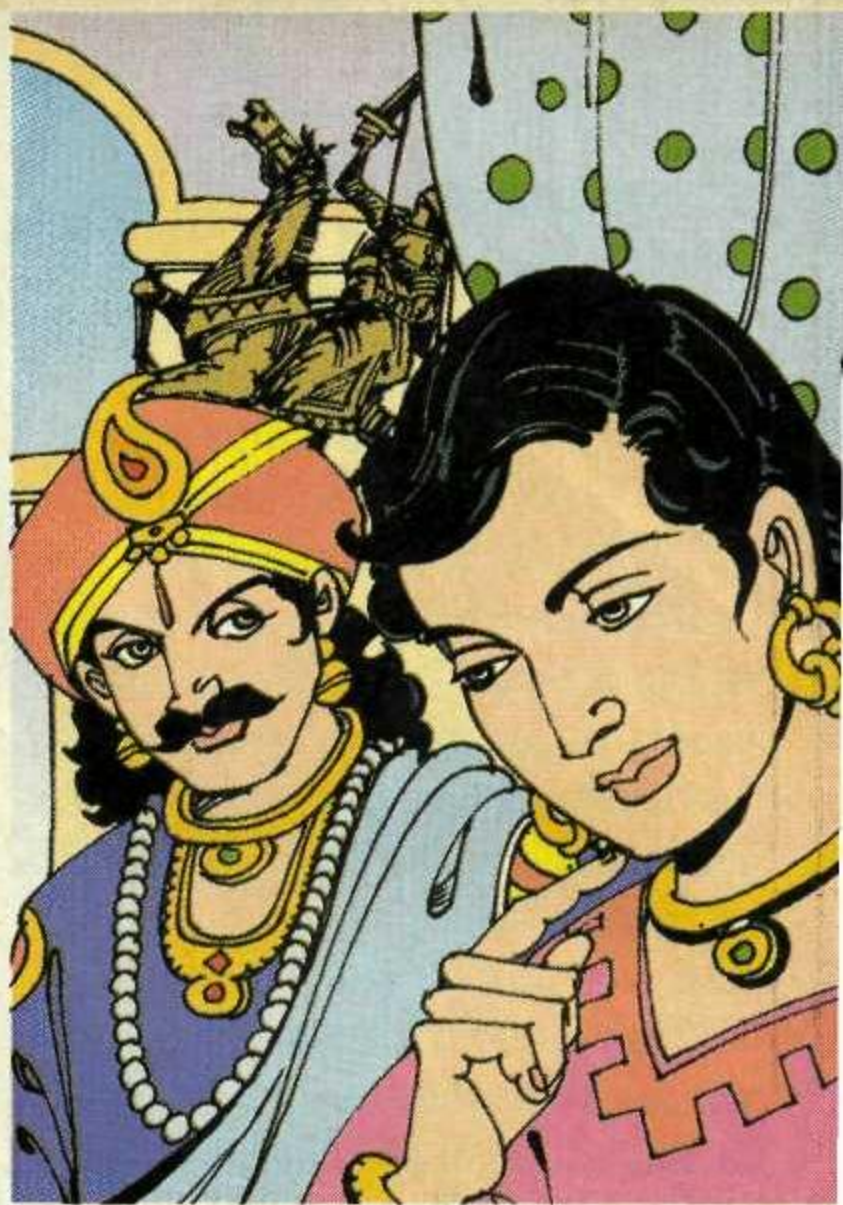
a very active member of the ring of conspirators!"

Vijaydatta sat stunned for a moment. He understood why his father was in a state of anguish and anxiety.

Even though once Kalindi had been conquered by Kaundinya and had again become independent, the kings of Kaundinya had been friendly with the kings of Kalindi for the past two or three generations. In fact, Sridatta and the present king of Kalindi, Madhavasena had been classmates and their queens were cousins. After the death of Vijaydatta's mother, Queen Sumati of Kalindi often invited the little prince to her palace and bestowed on him the love of a mother. She had a little daughter, Srilekha. It was well-known she would like Srilekha to marry Vijaydatta when both had grown up.

Vijaydatta's visits to Kalindi had become rare because he had grown up and was busy with his study. But he looked forward, most eagerly, to such rare occasions. It is because he loved Srilekha, the beautiful and intelligent princess.

Observing his son brooding over the situation, sadness writ large on his face, the king said, "My son, we have to accept the reality and act accordingly. I had long consultations with the Commander-in-chief of our army, Virbahu. We put our entire secret service on the job of finding out the



depth of the conspiracy. The report I received is staggering. But before you read the report, let me give you a background of the situation."

After a pause, the king said:

"Among the kingdoms of this region, Champaka is the largest in territory, now ruled by Maralabhupati. His father, the cruel Chakrabhupati, had become king by killing his elder brother, who was the heir to the throne. Maralabhupati is as cruel and cunning as his father. He has two sons. He has named his elder son, the heir to his throne, Chakrabhupati, after his father's name. Father and son are an excellent duo in scheming and planning mischief. Their greedy eyes are now focused on our family treasure.



"My son, you know that on the right side of Champaka is Kunda; to its left is Kalindi. The present king of Kunda, Vrishabhadhwaja, is old, weak and without any heir. According to our spies, he fell an easy prey to the wicked scheme of Maralabhupati and Chakrabhupati. He assured them that although he cannot fight himself, his army shall be at their disposal. Maralabhupati and Chakrabhupati plan to use him as their disguise. The father and son do not wish to be openly seen as our enemy. They will push Kunda to attack us.

They knew that Kalindi is friendly with us. While they were thinking how to handle Kalindi, Chakrabhupati learnt about Princess Srilekha's beauty. He grew determined to marry her."

Prince Vijaydatta gave a start. His father did not fail to notice that. In a sad tone he said, "My son, our elders

say that kingship is like a rose accompanied by thorns. That is true."

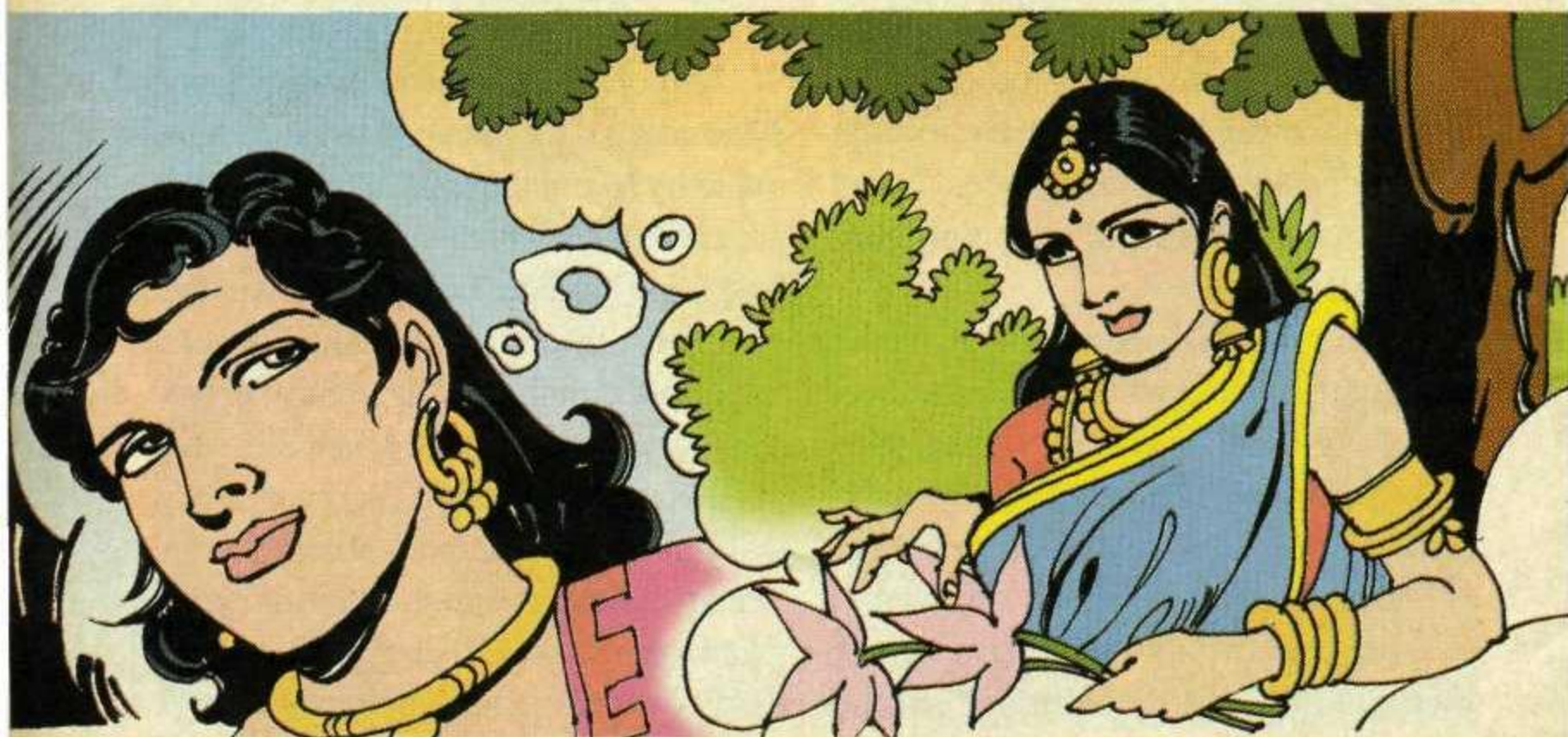
Vijaydatta's mind had suddenly gone over to the palace at Kalindi - once his second home. He was thinking of the charming Srilekha, his sweet playmate in childhood. He had taken it for granted that she would be his wife.


How unexpectedly the situation changed! Will the king of Kalindi forget his silent approval of their friendship and love? Will he make Srilekha a pawn on the political chess-board? Who knows, if he had already not given Srilekha in marriage to Chakrabhupati secretly, to appease that powerful neighbour!

There was silence between the king and the prince for a while.

But the prince shook himself back from his brooding. "Tell me more, Father!" he muttered in a grim voice.

(To continue)



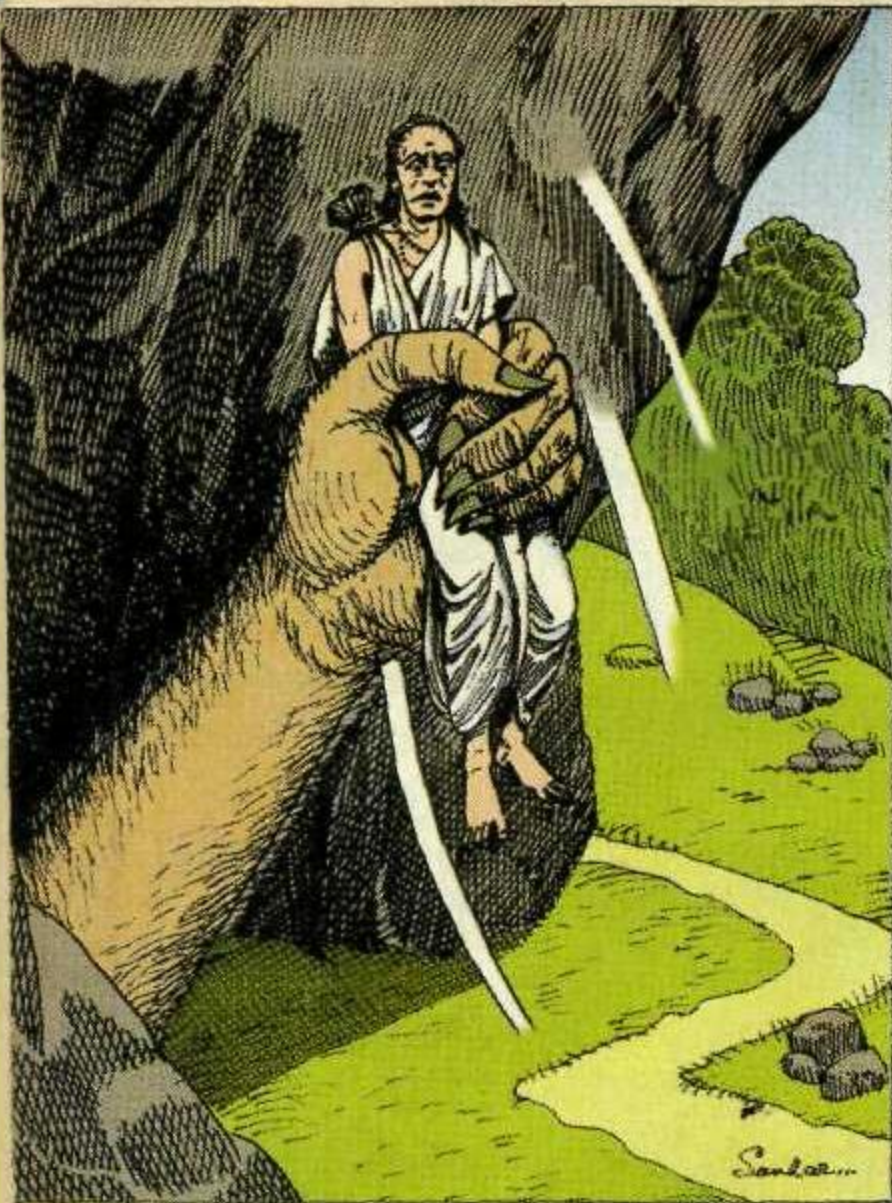


New tales of
King Vikram
and the Vetala!

THE DEMON'S DILEMMA

Dark was the night and weird the atmosphere. It rained from time to time; gusts of wind shook the trees; Between thunderclaps and the moaning of jackals could be heard the eerie laughter of spirits. Flashes of lightning revealed fearsome faces.

But King Vikram swerved not. He climbed the ancient tree once again and brought down the corpse. However, as soon as he began crossing the desolate cremation ground, with the



corpse lying on his shoulder, the Vetala that possessed the corpse spoke: "O King! You seem to be making untiring efforts, without respite. What do you wish to achieve? I pity you. Instead of enjoying a comfortable sleep on your cosy bed, you continue to pursue me. Why don't you give up this exercise? Are you sure that you are observing your royal duties? Are you true to your legitimate function? If not, you may repeat the kind of blunder which the demon Deerghabahu committed. Let me tell you what happened to him. Pay attention to my narration. That should relax you."

The Vetala went on:

Once upon a time there lived an old

pundit named Sankara Sastri in the kingdom of Kunthala. One day he performed a rite at a rich man's house in a far off village and began his homeward journey.

In order to reach home soon, he took to a short cut through a forest. He reached a place dense with tall trees and hillocks. Suddenly from a cave, a demon stretched his hand and grabbed Sankara Sastri in his fist and lifted him up.

A terribly shaken Shankar Shastri looked down and saw the demon's mouth open like a miniature cave and his teeth like two rows of sharp knives.

"Oye! What a dismal small dish! You will only increase my appetite. However, now that I'm hungry after a long sleep, probably for a week, I must eat you before going out in search of better food," observed the demon.

Shankar Shastri was a courageous man. Once the demon had started talking to him, he decided to use the situation to his advantage. He must at least try, he thought.

"O great demon, you are not only mighty but also capable of miracles! How otherwise could you have lifted me up from the road yonder, while sitting in front of your cave? Neither gods nor men could do this!" he said.

"Right!" commented the pleased demon. "Nor that every demon could



do this. I am gifted with very long arms. That is why my parents named me Deerghabahu—the long-armed. Look here!”

The demon stretched his right hand and plucked a palm-fruit from a tree in front of his cave.

“Marvellous!” exclaimed Shankar Shastri. “I am happy to be of some service to you as your appetiser. But, by the way, do you know how you were gifted with such arms which, I believe, are unusual even for demons?”

“I don’t know. But do you know anything about that?” asked the demon, rather surprised.

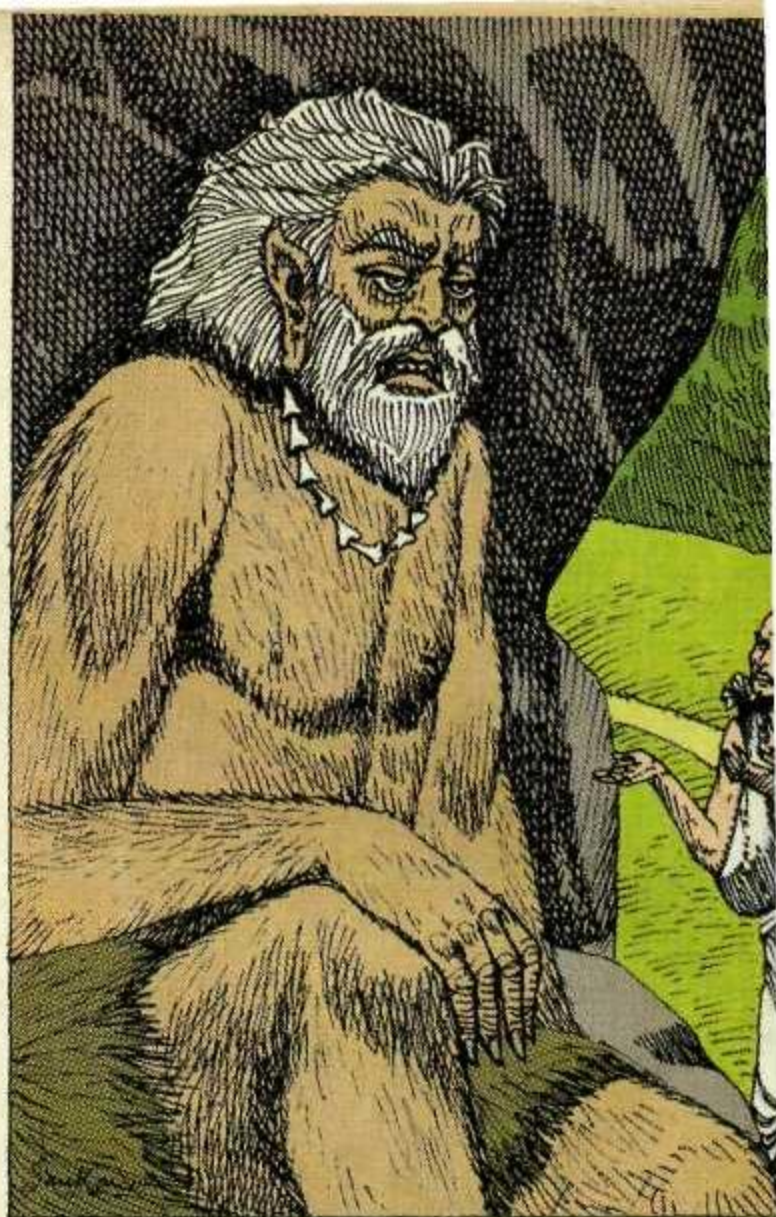
“I have to know, for that is my profession. I am an astrologer of a very special kind. I can know the past and the future of a person. By past I mean even one’s past life,” answered Shastri.

“I’ve never eaten an astrologer, I must confess. I don’t know how you’ll taste. But before I eat you, will you please disclose to me the mystery of my long arms?” asked the demon.

“You see, you were a human being in your previous life. Not only that, you were the disciple of a sage and you could learn the lessons taught by him faster than his other disciples. But you had one weakness – only one...”

“What was that?”

“Must I tell you? I hope, you’ll pardon me. You had the habit of stealing



things from other disciples or visitors who came to meet the sage. You acted very swiftly, as if you could thrust your hand into every nook and corner. At last one day when you stole some luddos which someone had offered to your guru, he cursed you saying that in your next life you’ll have very long arms. But since no human being can have arms beyond a certain size, you’ll be born as a demon.”

Shastri paused. The demon who heard him with rapt attention, asked, “Can you tell me where the guru is? I’ll like to throttle him with my long arms!”

Shastri laughed. “Your guru is beyond your arms. He is in heaven. But don’t get angry with him. When you

repented, the guru also gave you a boon. He said that your demonhood and those very long arms of yours can make you the king of the land."

"Is that so?" The demon was amazed.

"It is so. And, once you become the king, you can eat to your heart's content most delicious dishes!"

"A human being is the most delicious dish. I would like to eat three human beings a day. Will my subjects bear with me?" asked the curious demon.

"Gladly. The kingdom is overpopulated. They will be happy if their king brings down the population in a healthy way, that is to say - by himself growing more and more healthy!"

"Good. Now, how to become the king? The king is alive."

"Once you march into the capital, the king shall flee, leaving his throne for you."

"Very well. Please lead me to the right place."

The demon set out on his journey to the capital, led by Shankar Shastri.

As soon as they crossed the forest and reached the locality, Shankar Shastri merrily clapped and sang.

"What's the matter with you? Why are you so jubilant?" asked the demon.

"You see, I was afraid of wild animals as long as I was in the forest. Now I am happy because I am out of their reach," replied Shastri.



“Don’t wild animals come to the locality? Why?”

“They don’t. They live in the forest just as human beings live in the locality. A tiger or a leopard can kill a man when a man enters a forest. Similarly, a tiger or a leopard is likely to get killed once it enters the locality. Each creature should be where he belongs. The fish live in the water; the birds live on the trees, the wild animals in the forest, the human beings in the villages and towns. This is the rule made by nature,” explained Shastri. “A wild animal must be confined to the forest. That is *Pashudharma*-the rule for the animals,” added.

They walked silently for a while, along the bank of a river. There was a Gurukul to their right. Some of the students were practising archery; some others were wrestling; some more were reciting hymns or singing.

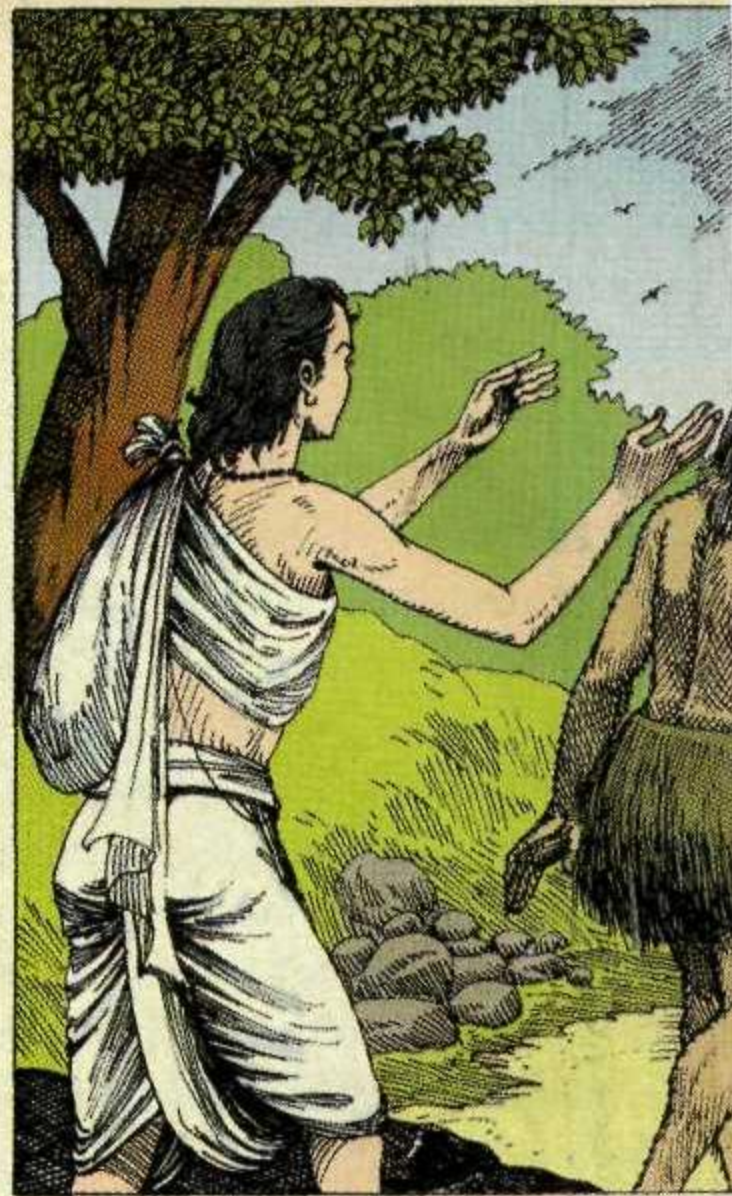
The demon observed them for a while and asked, “What is this?”

This is a school. A great sage runs it. Among his students there are several princes. They are learning archery and wrestling.”

While Shastri was speaking, the guru was seen coming out of a hut. A prince kept down his bow and prostrated himself before the guru.

“Must a prince become so very humble?” Asked the demon.

“Yes. One must be humble before



his guru. In fact, there is nothing which a student cannot sacrifice at the guru’s asking,” said Shastri.

“Why then the guru does not ask for the kingdom? He could become the king!” asked the demon.

“To make a prince a worthy king is the guru’s duty. The guru is conscious of his *gurudharma*-duty as a teacher. He will never like to do a thing which is against his *dharma*. The human world is so well-organised because the sense of duty rules the life of man. God has made man cleverer and wiser than all other creatures so that they will lead a good life. That is *Manavadharma* - the law of human conduct.

Shastri had just concluded his explanation when the demon turned and walked towards the forest with long strides. Next moment he was out of Shastri's sight.

Shastri laughed and walked towards his home which was not far.

The Vetala stopped and raising the scale of his voice, demanded of King Vikram, "O King, what happened to the demon who was so eager to become the king? Why did he retreat? Was it because he was afraid of the human locality? Was it because he felt that he had been tricked by Shastri and was annoyed with him? Why did he not gobble up Shastri before retreating into the forest? Answer me if you can, O King. Should you keep mum despite your ability to answer, your head would roll off your neck!"

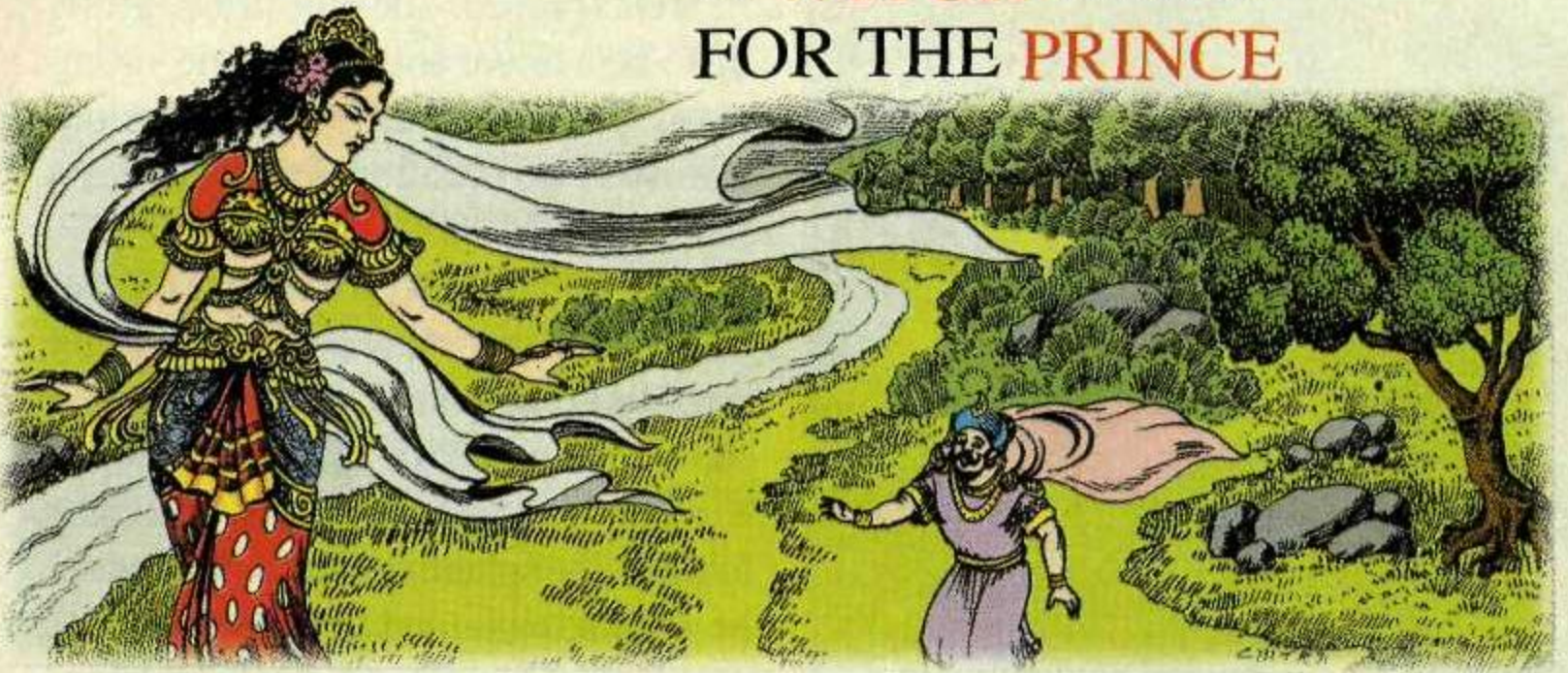
Forthwith answered King Vikram. "The demon was neither afraid of anybody nor annoyed with Shastri.

Although he was a demon, he had enough sense to understand that if Shastri had tricked him for saving himself, he had done so because man was cleverer than other creatures. But what made the demon wiser was the lesson Shastri gave him about the different *dharma*s or duties of different creatures. If the animals behaved according to *Pashudharma* and men in general did so according to *Manavadharma* and the guru according to *Gurudharma*, he should also act according to *Danavadharma* or the conduct natural to a demon. He could eat a human being in the forest, but not in the locality. It was not for a demon to become a king over the human beings. The forest was his home and not the palace. He retreated because he woke up to this truth."

No sooner had the king concluded his answer than the Vetala, along with the corpse, gave him the slip.



A WITCH-BRIDE FOR THE PRINCE



This happened long long ago. The queen of Shyamaldesh died after giving birth to a son. The young king, Dhanwant, was heart-broken. For a full year nobody dared to propose a second marriage for him. But when at last his well-wishers broached the proposal, he rejected it. "There is no dearth of women in the palace to nurse the little prince," he said.

Time passed. One day the little prince toddled up to his father and asked, "Why is my mother missing? Children who play with me have their mothers!"

"Your mother will be back soon," said the king hurriedly, to pacify the child. But thereafter he grew pensive. "Indeed, the child deserves the love of a mother, I'll fail in my duty if I cannot provide him with that necessity," he thought.

But he did not speak what was in

his mind to anybody.

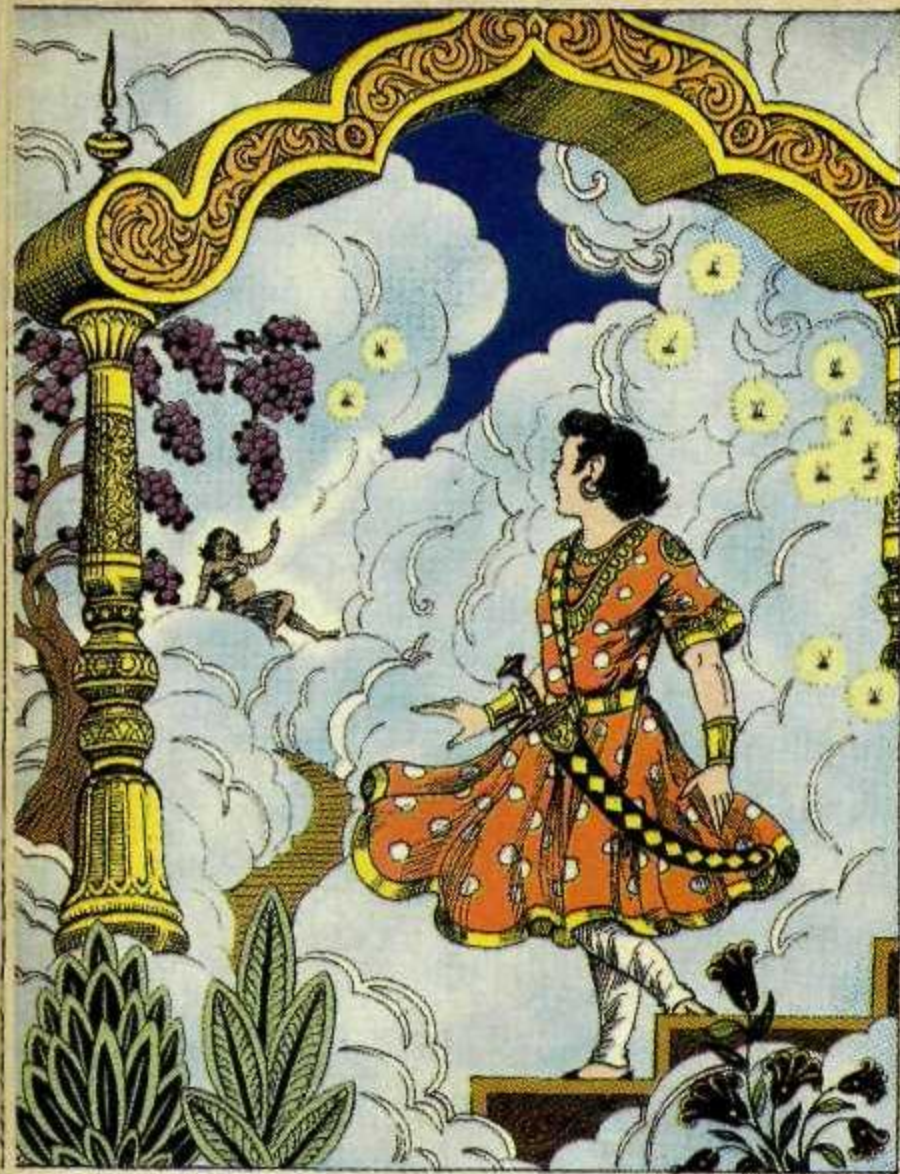
Sometimes, when he was in a thoughtful mood, he galloped along the river-bank, all alone. One evening, while he was doing so, he saw a beautiful young lady standing under a tree with flowers. He got off his horse and went near her and asked her who she was.

"Well, I'm one from a faraway sphere. I loved this tree and stopped to enjoy the fragrance of its flowers," she said.

"Whoever you are, I feel that you can best adorn the throne meant for the queen of my kingdom. My mother-less little son is in need of a mother," said the king.

"That's not possible," said the young lady.

"It is about to get dark. It is not safe for you to loiter here at this hour. I cannot be at peace if I leave you alone here! I will lead you to your parents."



With these words the king caught hold of her and tried to pull her towards his horse. But the lady snatched her arm from the king's grip and said angrily, "It is because of your eyes that you saw me. Grow blind! You must pay the price for your audacity to propose marriage with a Gundharva princess, being an ordinary mortal!"

Before the eyes of the horrified king the damsel flew into the air and disappeared. But that is also the last thing the king saw. Thereafter he grew blind.

Soon his bodyguards came looking for him and led him to the palace. All were sad for the king's misfortune. Physicians and wizards did their best, but nothing could restore to the king his eyesight.

Years passed. The little prince grew-up to be a brave and handsome young man. One day, from his father's old minister, he came to know how his father grew blind.

"It's in his anxiety to secure a mother for me that he lost his eyesight. It is my duty to go in search of the sphere of the Gundharvas," he thought.

"Far - far - have you to travel in order to reach the sphere of the Gundharvas!" he was told again and again by travellers, mendicants and pilgrims. "We've heard that it is beyond the mountains yonder. But who can go there?"

Tired and hungry, the prince sat down under a tree one evening and fell asleep. When he woke up, he saw an ugly old woman sitting near him with some delicious fruits. "Eat, young traveller, and there is a cool spring to quench your thirst"

"Who are you?" asked the prince.

"What do I look like?" asked the woman, grinning.

"To be honest, you look like a witch!"

"Very well, take me as that. But who are you and what brings you here?"

The prince told her all about his mission and asked her if she could lead him to the land of the Gundharvas.

"I can lead you to the gates of that land, but cannot cross into it," said the witch, "but on condition that you'll grant me what I will need of you."

"I will, if it is within my capacity to do so," said the prince.



Holding the hand of the prince, the witch took a leap into the clouds and flew over the mountains. Soon they descended before a magnificent archway.

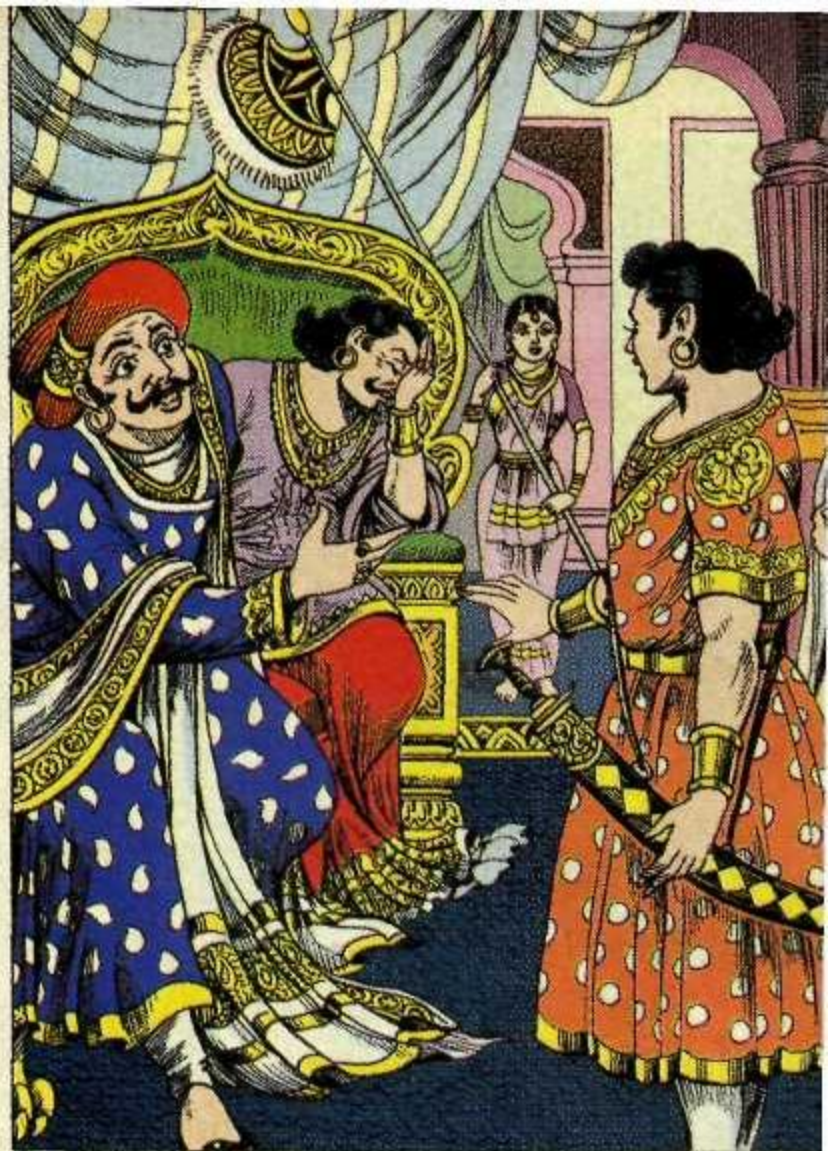
"I'll wait here till your return," said the witch, wishing the prince good luck.

The prince entered the strange sphere. Everything in it was charming. Male and female Gundharvas, feeling curious, crowded around him. He requested them to lead him to the Gundharva princess. They gladly obliged him.

The prince bowed to the surprised princess. "O noble Princess, I remind you of your curse thrown on an unfortunate king years ago, making him blind. It was on my account that he sought your hand in marriage, without knowing who you are. He has suffered your curse for twenty long years. Should you not lift it now?" he said pleadingly.

"It seems I misunderstood him," muttered the Gundharva princess. "Very well, take this flower and apply it to his eyes. He shall recover his vision. But this will be effective only if you prove to be a man who keeps his promises. Should you fail in your promises, your father shall grow blind again."

The prince received the flower and bowed to the Gundharva princess and came out of their sphere. The witch who awaited him took hold of him and leaped through the clouds to arrive right in front of the palace of King Dhanwant of Shyamaldesh.



"Now, dear Prince, you must keep your promise and grant me my wish." said the witch.

"Certainly. What's your wish?"

"You must marry me!"

The prince stood shocked and stunned. But his face soon showed signs of determination.

"All right. I'll marry you."

There was rejoicing inside the palace when the prince was seen, for everybody had been upset at his sudden disappearance. And when the prince met the king and brushed his eyes with the magic flower, the king began to see things after some twenty years. The king embraced his son, tears rolling down his cheeks. All the others burst out into shouts of joy.



"But, Father, you must allow me to do something which you may not like at all," said the prince and showing to the king the hideous-looking witch through a window, said again, "That is the lady who is to adorn the palace as your daughter-in-law."

"What! Are you mad?" cried out the king.

"Not exactly," said the prince, "but if I don't marry her, you may grow blind again!"

"I'll prefer blindness to this sight!" exclaimed the king.

"But I'll fail to keep my promise! That must not happen!" said the prince. He came out of the palace hurriedly and told the witch, "We'll marry. But first let's escape to some distant place. You may not be acceptable to them as the future queen of this land!"

"Hold my hand and then I'll do whatever you say." The witch extended her skinny hand.

The prince shut his own eyes and held her hand. But how long can she keep his eyes shut? He heard a sweet

sound of laughter and opened his eyes.

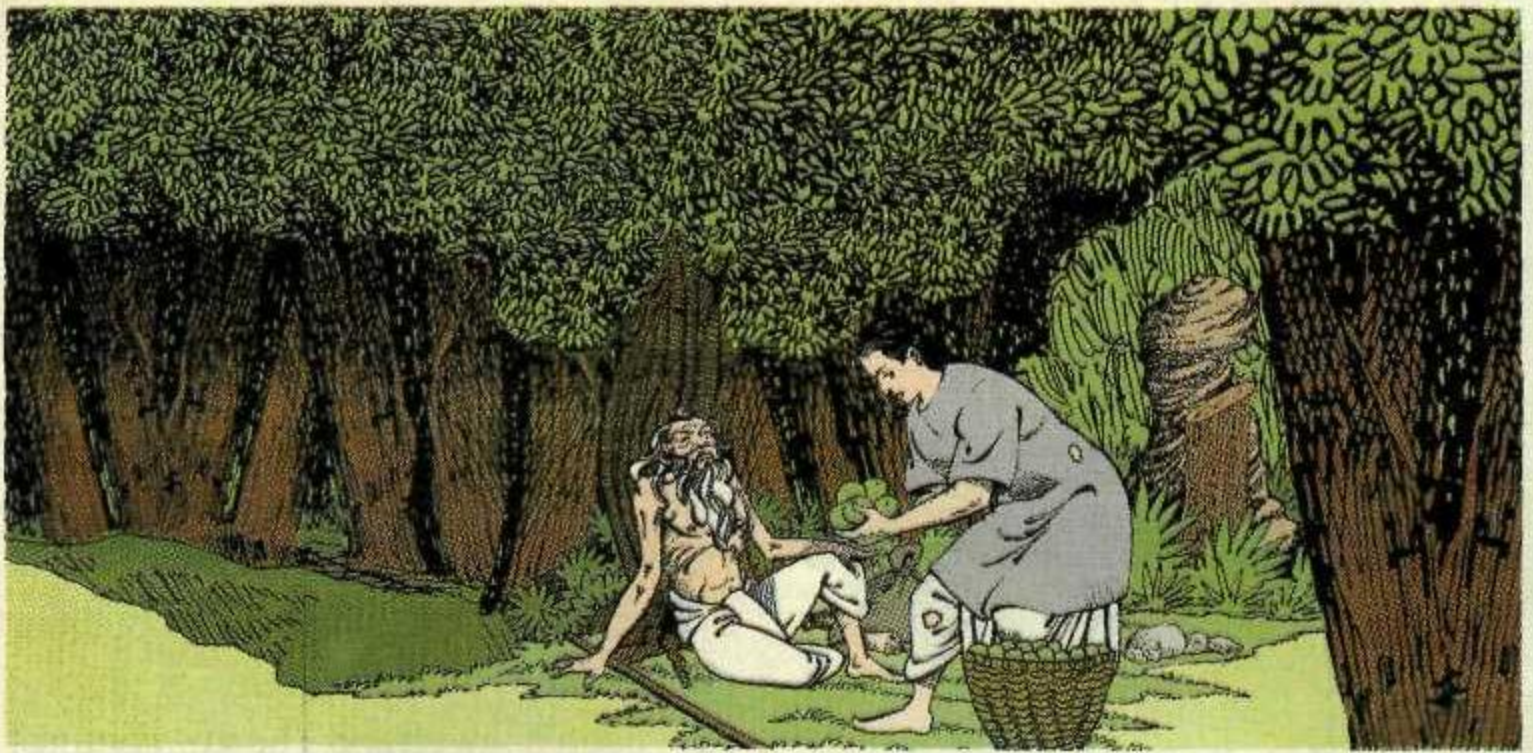
What should he see but a most beautiful damsel, blushing and laughing, laughing and blushing, held by him!

"What's this?" he stammered out.

"To be precise, I'm the princess of Vatsa. My father had a love for miracles. A wizard was his teacher. I too became interested in wizardry and the fellow taught me a lot. That's how I could lead you so swiftly to the land of the Gundharvas and back. But one day the wizard insisted on marrying me. Since I did not agree, he changed me into a witch. But when he realised that I too had learnt some spells, through which I could cause him some harm, say, make his voice hoarse like a donkey's or his tummy as big as an elephant's, he said that if someday some eligible bachelor would agree to marry me and hold my hand, I will get back my original form. I left my parents, palace and lived in solitude till I met you."

You can imagine what a festivity the kingdoms of Shyamaladesh and Vatsa would have witnessed!





THE MAN WHO WENT FORWARD

Long long ago, in a small village lived a poor man named Haridas. He earned his living by toiling in the fields of the households of the wealthy.

But there were not many wealthy people in the locality and they had not enough work to offer him day after day.

Once it so happened that he went without any work for three consecutive days. His family was on the verge of starving.

“Let me go into the forest. Maybe I’ll find some edible fruit or roots,” he thought and he entered the forest.

After some searching, he found some juicy guavas hanging from a tree, quite ripe. He was delighted. He climbed the tree and plucked them. “This much should do for today,” he thought as he climbed down.

On his journey back home, he saw a hermit seated under a tree. The old man looked so weak that Haridas was sure he had not eaten for many days. “I can give him my share of the guavas. I can pull on for yet another day without any food,” he thought and he quietly kept a few guavas before the hermit.

The hermit opened his eyes and smiled. Haridas bowed to him. “This is my humble offering to you, Sir,” he said. “I wish I could give you something more valuable. But I’m so poor!”

The hermit smiled again, but said nothing.

“Sir, give me a word of advice before I leave you. I would consider myself fortunate to hear your voice,” said Haridas.

“Go forward, my boy!” said the



hermit and he closed his eyes.

Haridas decided to act as advised. He stood up, turned and began walking forward. He had not gone far when he found a piece of silver lying before him. He picked it up and straightaway went to the bazaar. He sold it and returned home with a bagful of rice, vegetables, sweets, and some surplus money.

Next day, he went into the forest with sweets for the hermit. But the old man was not to be seen.

Suddenly Haridas thought, "The hermit had asked me to go forward. He had not told me how far! Let me go farther."

He started walking. In a dense area of the forest, he found a piece of gold. He returned home, delighted. He sold it in the town for a good price. He constructed a house, bought lands, and opened a shop in the village.

He prospered. Years passed. Then, one day, he wondered, "Why should I not go still farther?"

He began walking into the forest and passed the spots where he had found the silver and the gold.

Suddenly what should he see but a piece of diamond lying before him! He carried it to the king. Experts said that a diamond of that quality was not there either in the royal collection or among the queen's jewellery. The king bought it. He was also impressed by Haridas's humility and goodness. He invited him to visit the court from time to time.

Familiarity with the king brought Haridas prestige in society. After a year the king made him a noble in his court. By then he had become a prominent merchant and landlord. His sons managed his business and his property well.

Once in a while Haridas would feel a strong urge to meet the hermit and convey his gratefulness to him. But he never saw the old man again, though he looked for him, here and there in the forest time and again.

One day Haridas asked himself why he should not go even farther forward! Next day he took the path meandering through the forest and never stopped walking till it was evening. In fact, he had forgotten time. He had crossed the spot where he had found the diamond.

He stumbled against a rock and

realised that it was dark. He had come deep into the forest. He must find a shelter for the night.

He looked in every direction. Soon he saw the flicker of a light. He advanced towards it. There was a small hut. Inside, before a lamp, sat an old man. Haridas tiptoed in and knelt down and gazed into his face. Yes, he was the hermit he had met some twenty years ago. The hermit had not changed.

"The hermit had given me the keyword that brought me prosperity, but he himself continued to dwell in a hut. Why? One who could lead others to prosperity could have prospered himself if he wished to!" Haridas

continued to reflect on the question.

The hermit opened his eyes and smiled. Haridas suddenly seemed to have found the answer to his question.

"What do you want now?" asked the hermit.

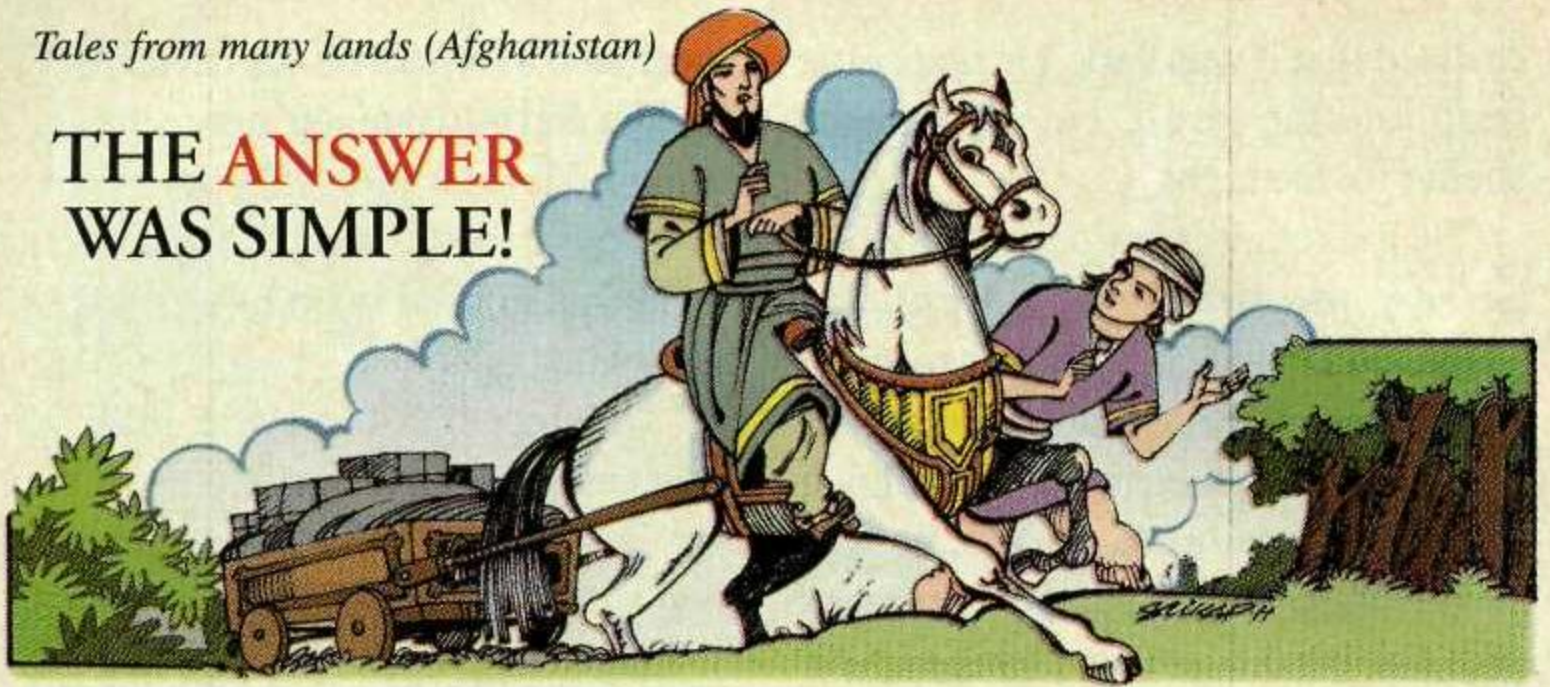
"Master! Give me the kind of prosperity you have got!"

"Why not! Don't stop going forward!" said the hermit.

Thereafter, Haridas was seen neither in his village nor in the royal court. Going forward had assumed a new meaning for him. It was an adventure no longer into the forest, but into his own consciousness. The hermit was his example.



THE ANSWER WAS SIMPLE!



In good old days there lived a wealthy merchant. He was as stingy as he was selfish.

One morning he set out on business to a faraway town. He hired a young man named Yusuf as his servant who would accompany him.

"But, Master, I may not be able to bear the strain of the long travel," murmured Yusuf.

"That's no problem. I'll share the strain with you," said the merchant.

The merchant rode his horse loaded with goods, while Yusuf ran ahead. The merchant never gave him an opportunity to ride for a while.

All day long they thus journeyed with some rest from time to time. In the evening they came to a place where the merchant decided to halt for the night. After they had pitched the tent and eaten their supper, the trader asked his servant to take the saddle off the horse and keep guard while he enjoyed some sleep.

"Master, what about our sharing the strain? Shouldn't you let me sleep for half the night while you guarded the horse?" proposed Yusuf.

"My boy, I can solve the issue of sharing your strain in a different way. It will be strenuous for you to guard both the merchandise and the horse at the same time. So, you guard only the horse outside the tent; I guard the merchandise inside the tent."

Yusuf obediently sat outside the tent, leaning on the trunk of a tree and kept vigil. As he was tired, soon he too fell into a slumber.

Suddenly, in the middle of the night, his master's voice startled him up. "What are you doing, Yusuf?" asked the merchant in a sleepy tone from under his shelter.

"I'm pondering!" replied the servant with a presence of mind.

"What are you pondering over?" enquired the merchant.

"What do I do, if coming to pluck a rose, I see only thorns and no rose?"

"Well, you should simply walk away without touching the thorns. No doubt, you are an alert watchman! Keep up, my boy!" exclaimed the master and went back to sleep.

A couple of hours passed. The trader awoke and asked again, "Tell me, O my servant, what are you doing now?"

Yusuf who had in fact just closed his eyes was shaken up again and he replied in a lazy strain, "I'm still wondering, my master!"

"What are you wondering of, this time?"

"Oh! What will happen if the sun suddenly decides not to rise tomorrow?"

"Why should I bother? I'll walk away without waiting for the sun, as soon as it is dawn!" said the master with a satisfied note and then caught up with his sleep.

Some more time lapsed and it was nearing dawn. The merchant got up once again. "Do you hear me, Yusuf? How are you doing now?" he asked.

"I'm still deeply contemplating!" was the plain reply.

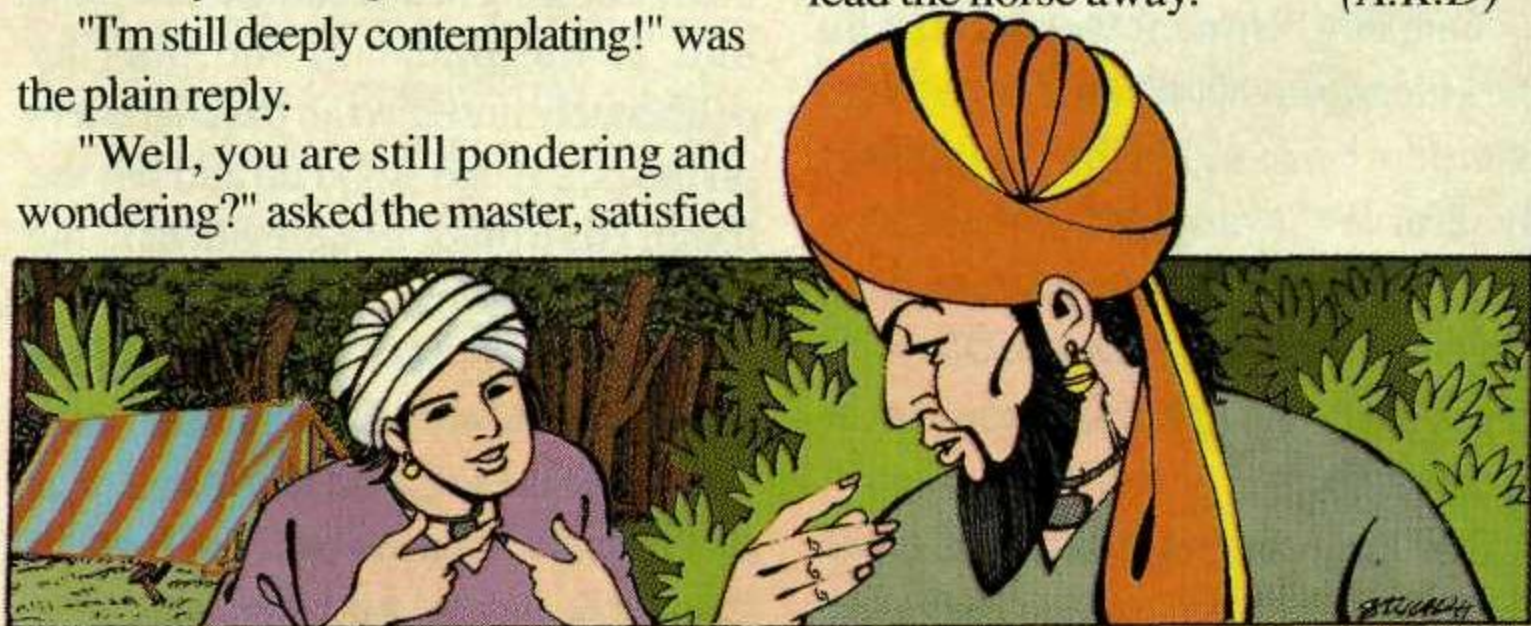
"Well, you are still pondering and wondering?" asked the master, satisfied

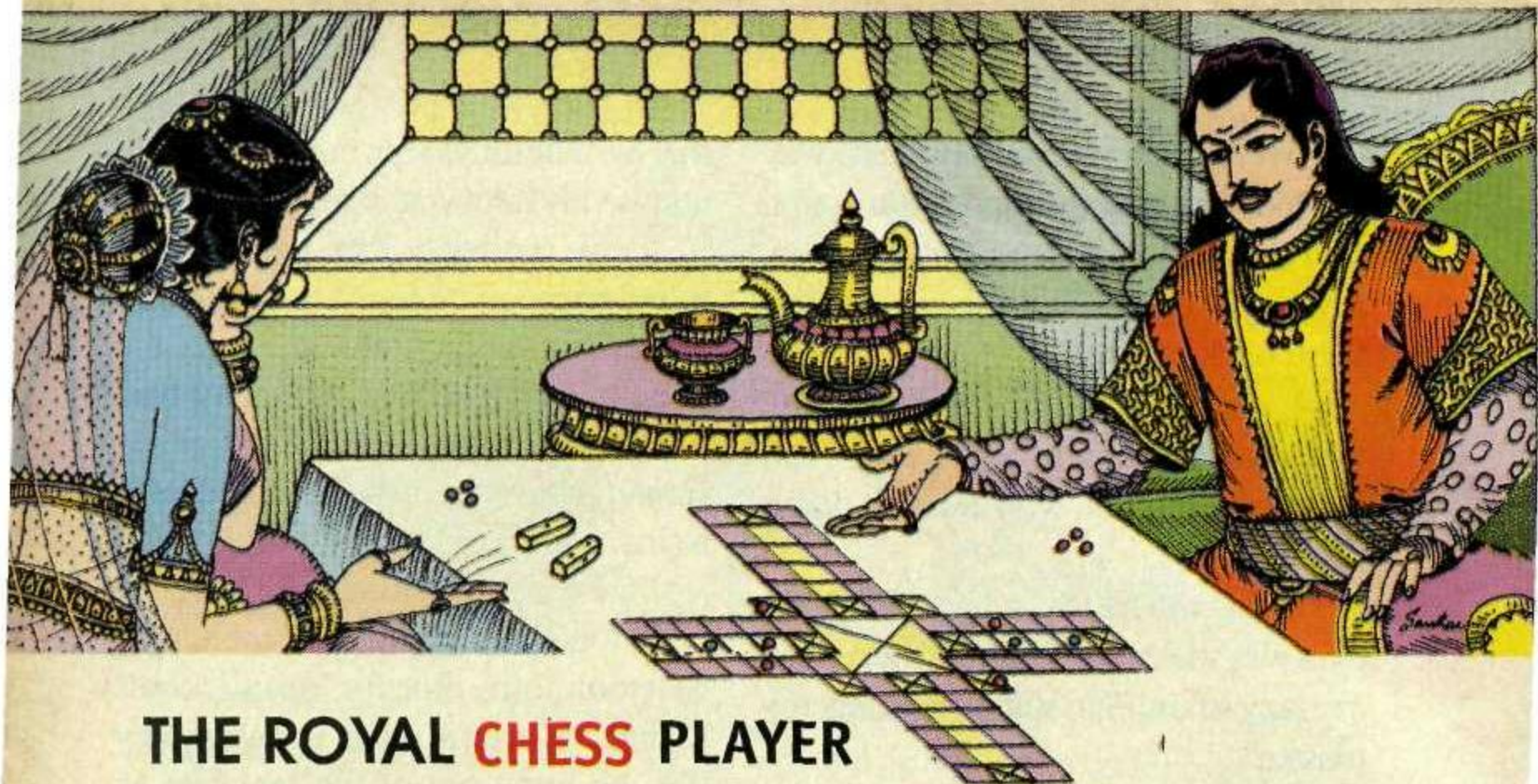
that his faithful servant had so long very attentively kept watch over his horse.

"Yes, indeed I'm pondering, wondering and deeply thinking that yesterday, O Master, you rode the horse and I ran in front. But today, who will ride the horse and who will run in front if there is no horse?" said Yusuf in a slow, measured tone.

"The answer is simple! We both will walk together!" replied the merchant, as it took some time for Yusuf's words to sink into his dull mind. But when they did, he burst out of the tent like an arrow. He saw only the saddle lying on the ground and his handsome horse was nowhere to be seen. He bemoaned his fate and buried his head between his hands.

Nevertheless, from that day onwards, to everyone's surprise, a change came over in the selfish trader. He realised that had he shared Yusuf's strain and guarded the horse for half of the night, Yusuf would not have fallen asleep making it easy for the thief to lead the horse away. (A.K.D)





THE ROYAL **CH**ESS PLAYER

It was a time of peace. Ratnapal, the king of Suvarnagiri, had enough leisure to go on playing chess with his queen or some of his nobles.

The art of this game had been taught to him by his own chief minister, Srimant. However, Srimant himself had very little time to play with the king, for he was busy with the works of administration.

One day, Srimant was invited by the king to play with him. Some of the courtiers surrounded the two players to observe the progress of their play. In the first round Srimant defeated the king. That was expected. He was known to be the greatest chess-player in the country.

The king congratulated him; in the second round Srimant was defeated.

The defeated chief minister and the courtiers congratulated the king. The king smiled, but it was a lifeless smile.

Generally the king sat for chess every day in the afternoon. The next day he played with two of his courtiers, but his usual interest in the play was lacking.

The day after that those who were to play with the king waited for an hour. The king at last came to the table but, at the midst of the play he deliberately unsettled all the characters on the board and stood up and left the room. His irritation was evident in the table itself getting almost toppled!

The queen who was passing by stopped. "What's the matter with you?" she asked, quite curious.

"I don't know. But I've lost all interest in chess," said the king.



The next day the king did not play at all; nor did he engage himself in any other pastime. He appeared to be sulking under some kind of a humiliation.

The queen observed him for a few days. One day she told him, "A great chess-player is camping at my father's palace. I've sent word to my brother to send him here. Maybe, you'll love to play with him. Maybe, he would teach you some new tricks!"

The king was not very enthusiastic about it. Nevertheless, when the young chess-player named Anand arrived, he agreed to play with him.

In the first round the king defeated Anand. Everybody present clapped their hands. But thereafter the king was defeated every time. He looked red in the face. He stood up, saying, "Enough!"

Just then his chief minister, Srimant, entered the room.

"My lord, may I try my hand with the great chess-player?" He asked.

"Please do!" said the king.

Anand was defeated by Srimant easily – and again and again. The king looked happy, but what amazed him, everytime Anand himself clapped his hands when defeated.

The session was over. "My dear king, I understand that once you had



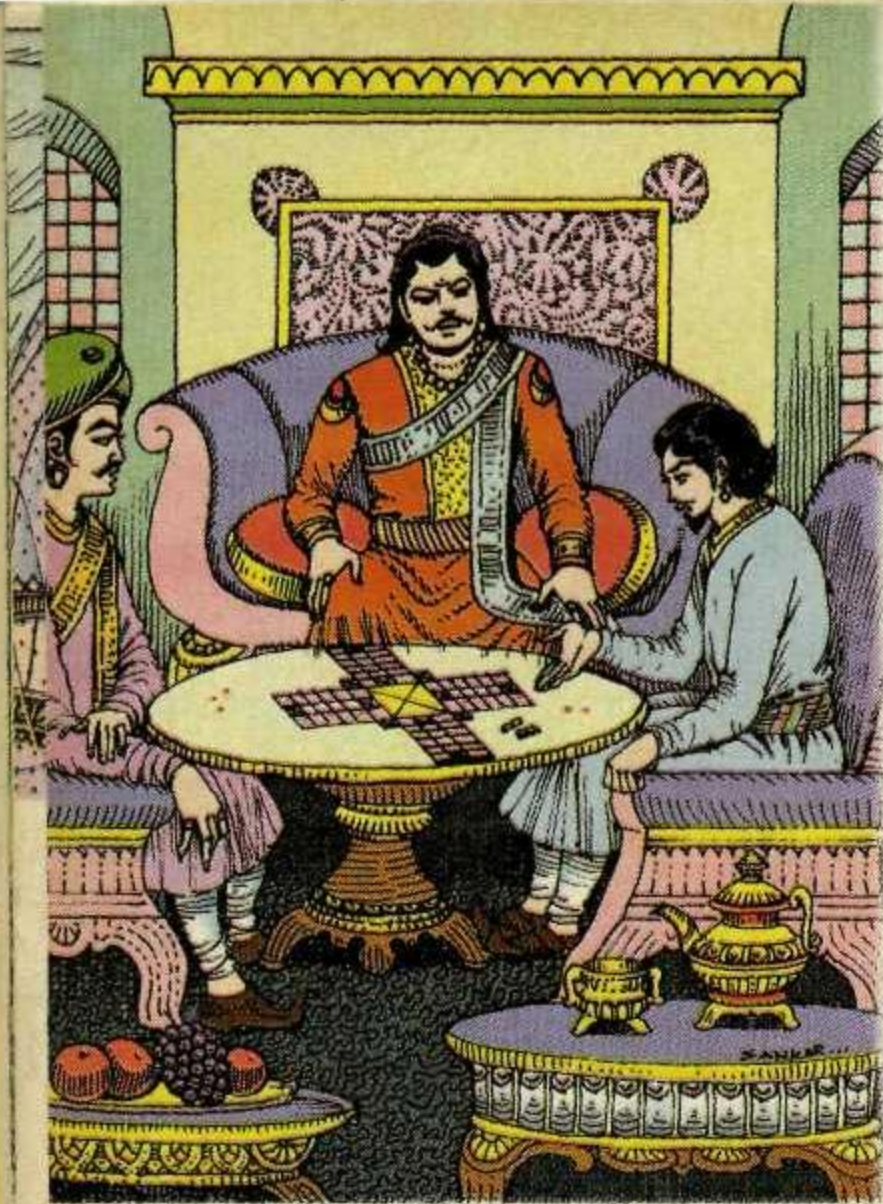
great interest in the game of chess. But now you have lost it. Am I right?" asked Anand.

"Yes," agreed the king. "I don't know why!" he added.

"The cause is not far to seek, my lord. Before you played with Srimant the other day, you used to always win. Am I right?" asked Anand again.

"Right."

"My lord, there are two ways of deriving happiness out of the game. One is to feel happy by winning a victory over the opposite player. The other is to derive joy out of the play itself, unmindful of defeat or victory. In this second case the joy lies in



applying one's mind and intelligence to the game in the best possible way. After all, only one can win, not both. When the opponent wins, to discover the secret of his victory could be as much a matter of joy as one's own victory. My lord, I hope, I'm not boring you," said Anand.

"Not at all! I had never looked at the game from this angle!" confessed the king.

"I know. You took it only as something which always reminds you that you are superior to others in the art. To be frank, that was an illusion. The queen is not an expert player. So you always defeated her. Your

courtiers were afraid of displeasing you. So they saw to it that you won. It is only when Srimant defeated you, your depression started!" said Anand. Then after a pause, he said, "But did you observe how much happiness every defeat of mine brought me? It was because I was playing for the joy of play, not for winning."

"Did I really defeat you in the first game? Or did you feign defeat?" asked the king.

"You really defeated me, because my attention was not in my play, but in your play. I wanted to measure your talent and to observe your style," said Anand.

"But is it not surprising that Srimant could defeat you every time?" queried the king.

"He could, because he is the greatest chess-player I know. He is also my teacher!"

Anand removed his disguise. And whom did the king see? He was the queen's younger brother, his very dear brother-in-law.

"My dear brother, you've done me a great good; you've changed my outlook," exclaimed the king.

"Thank my wise sister. It is she who was the producer and director of this little drama!" said the young prince.

THE ASCETIC AND THE ANGLER



A traveller saw a man angling near a lake. When near him, he asked, "Gentleman, will you kindly tell me which is the way to Bhimpur?"

The angler, far from replying, did not even look at the traveller.

"Gentleman, did you hear me? Which is the way to Bhimpur? I am a stranger to this land," the traveller said once again, after waiting for a while.

Even then the angler made no reply. Disgusted, the traveller moved away, cursing the man. But tired as he was, he sat down on a slab of stone a few yards away.

After five minutes he saw a young ascetic approaching the angler.

"Sir, which is the way to Bhimpur?" the ascetic asked the angler.

The traveller pricked his ears to hear what the angler would say so that he too could benefit by the answer.

But the angler paid no heed to the ascetic either. The ascetic repeated his

question, but to no avail.

The traveller was sure that the ascetic would grow angry and curse the rude angler. But nothing like that happened. To his great surprise the traveller saw the ascetic prostrating himself before the angler and then quietly resuming his journey.


His spell of surprise over, the traveller ran to catch up with the ascetic.

"Holy man, will you please reveal to me the reason for your showing such respect to that angler? Wasn't he extremely discourteous?"

"Please don't speak ill of my guru!" replied the ascetic.

"Guru? Is that angler your guru?" asked the traveller utterly puzzled.

"It's so. He taught me concentration. Didn't you see how he remained totally undisturbed by my question? Not only his look, but also his mind was concentrated on his goal alone. I wish, I could concentrate on God in the same manner!" explained the ascetic.



*Glimpses of a great civilisation –
its glorious quest for Truth through the ages.*

Saga



1. ONCE UPON A TIME: ON THE BANKS OF RIVER SARASWATI

"Have you read this news, Grandpa?" Sandip asked excitedly as he came running towards Devnath who, with his walking stick, was heading towards the river-bank for a stroll. The sun was about to set and the mild breeze was quite inviting. Nature promised a tender evening over their small town.

Devnath stopped. He had taught history all his life and had done much research on India's past. He had many worthy students. But nobody had been so very demanding, so much curious in his subject as Sandip. The boy was still in the school, but he would love to learn everything under the blue sky. Why not! After all he had such a wonderful grandpa. Having retired after a glorious career as a professor, educationist and Vice-Chancellor of a University, Devnath had plenty of time at his disposal to satisfy his grandson's thirst for knowledge. If he did not know an answer to the boy's question, he was most willing to learn it himself. Together

they explored the professor's library rich with select books. Devnath quoted Voltaire, the French thinker, again and again: "The more I read, the more I meditate. The more I know, the more I realise that I know nothing!"

Sandip deeply admired Devnath. In him he found a friend, philosopher and guide.

"Yes, my boy, what surprise do you have in store for me?" asked Devnath.

"Grandpa, our ancient literature speaks about a great river named Saraswati. But it is not to be seen. Once a well-known speaker even told us that such a river never existed. But here in this magazine it is reported that the satellite named Landstat has photographed the course of the river! Fourteen km wide, it flowed from the Himalayas!" exclaimed Sandip.

"That is right, my child! And there is more to it. Only a few years ago Mr. Paul-Henri Francfort, a well-known archaeologist, made a thorough research on this great river. He is of the

f India

opinion that the river disappeared more than four thousand years ago, probably because of a long spell of drought. There could be other reasons. The Saraswati was not the only river to disappear. Another to have gone the same way was known as the Drisadvati.

"Is it not rather strange for some people to say that they never existed?"

"Not strange. We do not know much about India's past. For hundreds of years we lived a kind of lethargic life. We did not take much initiative in research or exploration or discovery. But studious scholars coming from the West did much for us. They uncovered for us the wonders like the monument of Sanchi and treasures of art like Ajanta and Ellora. They discovered many of our valuable old manuscripts and showed us the wisdom they contained. At the same time they floated some theories which were false. For example, they said that the Aryans invaded India long long ago and fought with the natives who came to be known as the Dravidians. Our own historians and teachers accepted the theory without ever caring to examine it. We were taught this theory in our history


books. But today any serious scholar can see that there is not even an iota of proof in support of the theory. On the other hand, it has done much harm to India. We have looked upon ourselves as two different races!"

"Grandpa, what could have happened to the people who lived on the banks of the river Saraswati when it dried up?"

The two now began to walk along the river-bank. Devnath warmed up. He said:

"They must have faced a crisis. But that could not have been sudden. By





and by they would have left in search of new pastures. It was a vast country and there was no dearth of space. But the culture and literature they had developed on the banks of the Saraswati became their greatest wealth, the greatest glory of our nation. They are known as the Vedas."

"They carried the books wherever they went; did they?"

Devnath smiled. "They carried the Vedas - but only in their memory. Even if they knew the art of writing, they practised the discipline of memorising the Vedas - mind you - four of them - Rig Veda, Yajurveda, Sam Veda and Atharva Veda."

"Incredible!" exclaimed Sandip.

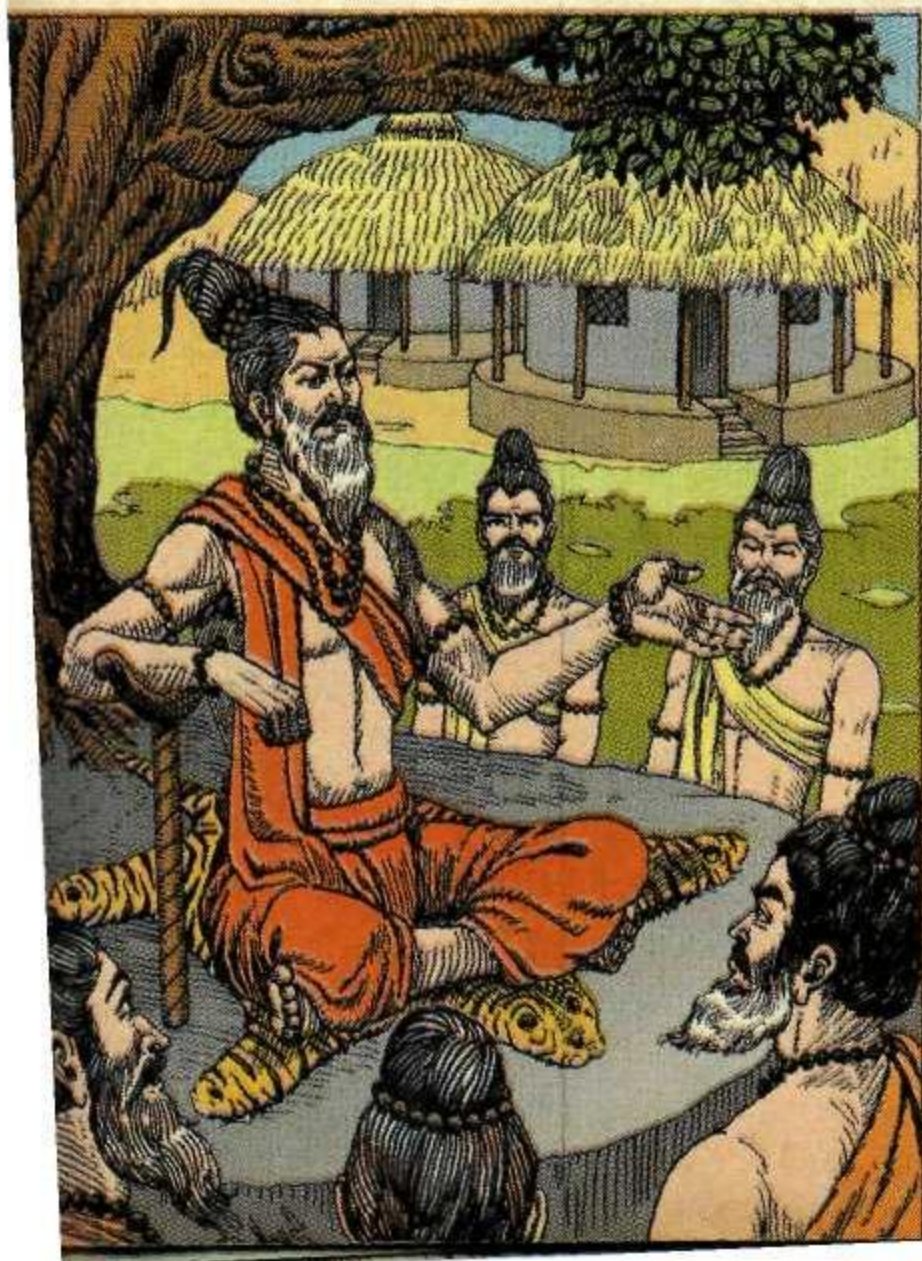
"Incredible to us, but their life-style was quite different from ours. I do not mean that everybody of that lost civilisation could remember the Vedas. But those who did were known as the Rishis, that is to say, seers and sages. They were the teachers of the society. They had achieved a great power of concentration. They recited the hymns of the Vedas in a particular rhythm which helped them to remember not only the words, but also their accurate pronunciation and punctuation."


"But why did they take that much pain, Grandpa?"

"I was expecting that question, Sandip! When we decide to take any pain for anything, we do so for some pleasure or some profit. What interested the Rishis was neither pleasure nor profit as we understand them. They were seekers. They sought answers to fundamental problems and puzzles of life. Why do we live? What happens to us after death? Why do we suffer? So on and so forth. They believed that the Vedas carried the answers to such questions."

"But who wrote the Vedas?"

"That is the mystery. Nobody wrote them in the sense we write books, reports or letters. They were heard by the Rishis. That is why they are known as *Srutis* - what is heard. They believed that there were higher planes





from which truths could come down into human consciousness, as inspired words."

"How much I wish such truths could come down to me!" Sandip observed in mock-seriousness.

"They too were human beings like us! Sandip! If it could happen to them, it can also happen to you! Nachiketa was younger than you when he discovered the mystery of life after death!"

"Nachiketa! The name sounds familiar!"

"Is that all? Don't you know why is the name remembered for so many centuries?"

"I'm afraid, no."

"You see, the Vedas were followed by a series of books called the Upanishads. We read about Nachiketa in one such book known as the Kathopanishad. His father, Sage Vajasravas, was performing a Yajna. On that occasion he was giving away whatever he possessed.

The young Nachiketa observed this.

Then, approaching his father, he asked, "To whom did you give me away?"

As he repeated his question, his father got annoyed and said, "To Yama!"

Silently Nachiketa walked up to the

abode of Yama - who is none other than the god of Death. But the god was absent. Nachiketa stood alone, without food or sleep, for three days until Yama was back.

Impressed by the boy's sincerity, the god offered him three boons as rewards for three days of his patient waiting.

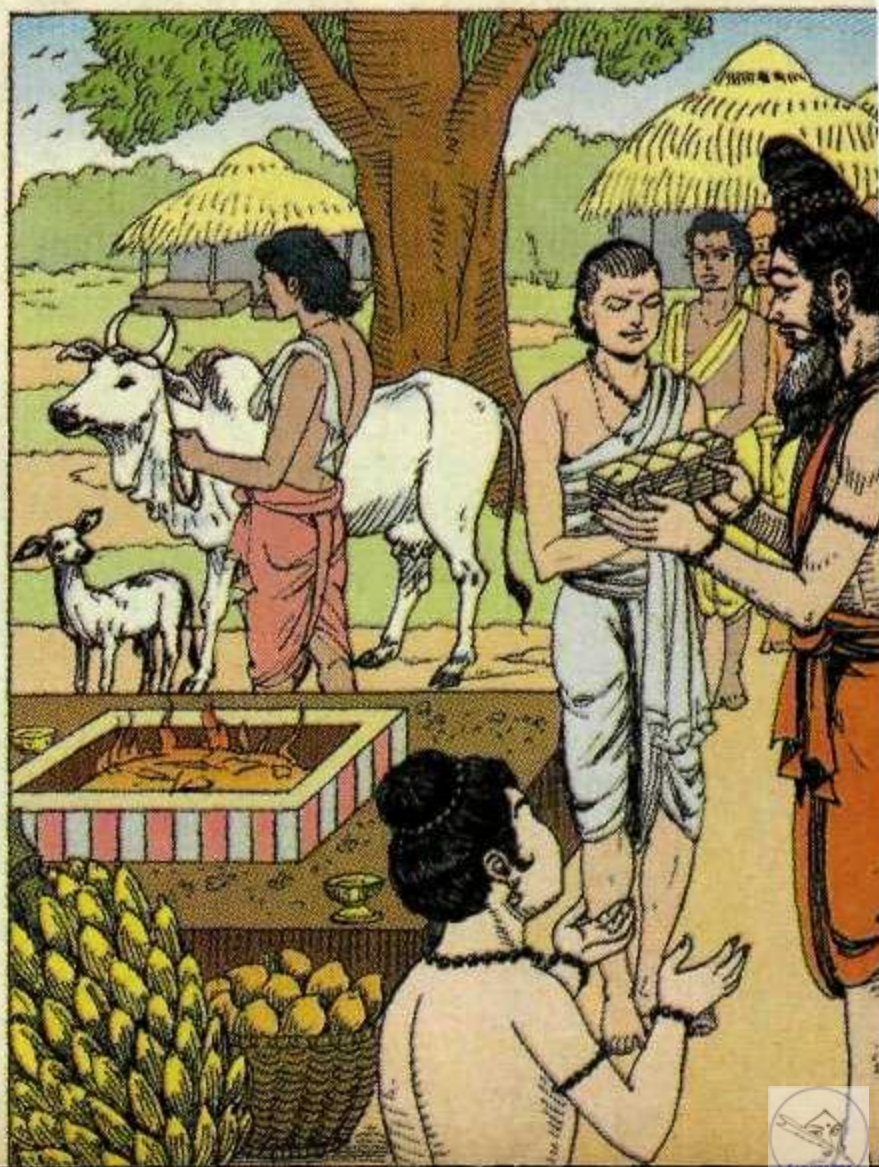
"Grant peace to my father, who might be feeling anxious on account of my absence," said Nachiketa.

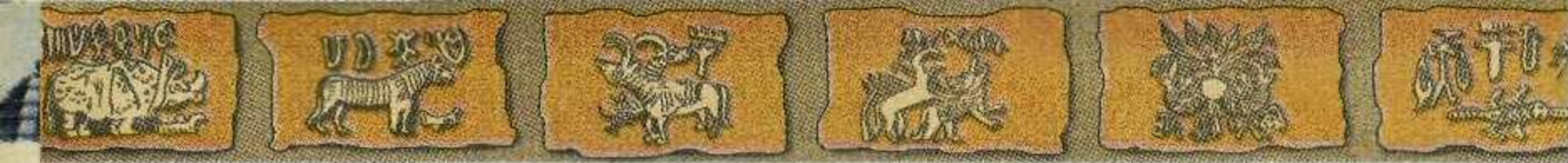
"Granted," responded Yama.

"Give me the knowledge of heavens."

"Granted."

"Reveal to me the mystery of death; kindly tell me what happens to one after one's body falls."





Yama had not expected such a question from a small boy. "My son, that is not for you to know. Ask me for something that would make you happy - long life, prosperity and power, for example."

"O Compassionate God, none of such things can bring me true happiness. Give me the knowledge I have prayed for. That alone will satisfy me," insisted Nachiketa.

Yama, at last, had to reveal to him the knowledge of the soul - which is immortal and which passes from one life into another. Nachiketa returned home enlightened. He became a celebrated Rishi.

"Was it possible for them to locate the abode of Yama?" asked an amused Sandip.

"My boy, such stories are not to be understood only by their plot outlines. They have more to them than meets the eye. Sage Vajasravas was not likely to get angry or throw a curse

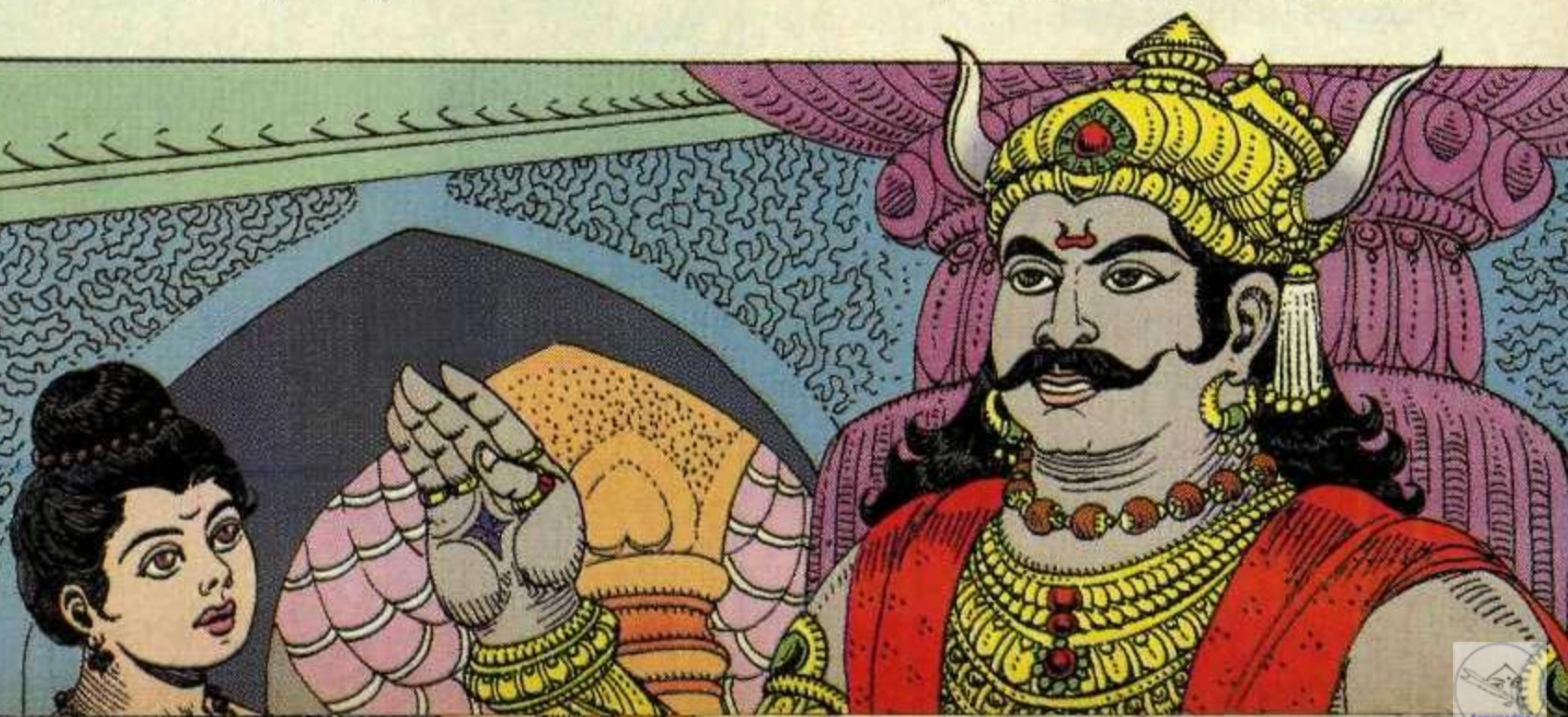
on his son. Had he done that much, the incident would hardly be worthy of finding a place in the Upanishads. I believe, he gave his son a responsibility. He assigned him the task of meditating on the mystery of death. Nachiketa must have meditated on the issue for three days. The revelation that the soul was immortal must have come to him at the end of this period," explained Devnath.

"Amazing!"

Sandip looked delighted.

"Amazing, indeed! When you deeply think over the texts of the Vedas and the Upanishads, you cannot but wonder about the profound wisdom of their authors. No other ancient civilisation has left any record of the human quest similar to that of India, on such fundamental issues of life," said Grandpa, and heaving a sigh, added, "If only we could prove ourselves worthy of our ancestors!"

(To continue)—*Visvavasu*



The Goat's Leap

Text: Jayanthi Mahalingam

Illustrations: Goutam Sen

After leaving Shivasamudram, the river receives a tributary called the Arkavati at Kanakapura, about 113 km from Bangalore. It rises in the Nandidurga Hills and the Chamarajasagar reservoir which supplies water to Bangalore city is built on it. The *sangama* or confluence of the two rivers occurs in a thickly-forested area which is well-known for its silkworm-rearing farms. Hundreds of cocoons can be seen growing on large bamboo screens all along the route.

The Kaveri's course becomes tortuous and the water plays hide-and-seek like a truant child! It can be glimpsed in snatches, glimmering between boulders of fantastic shapes, or suddenly disappearing down a deep cleft, only to re-emerge some distance away. More distracting than the Kaveri itself is the surrounding boulder-strewn terrain. The colours of the stones range from blue and pink to black and white. The constant friction of the moving water has sculpted them into weird shapes, like elephant's feet, giant vessels and perfect spheres, smoothed to a glass-like sheen.

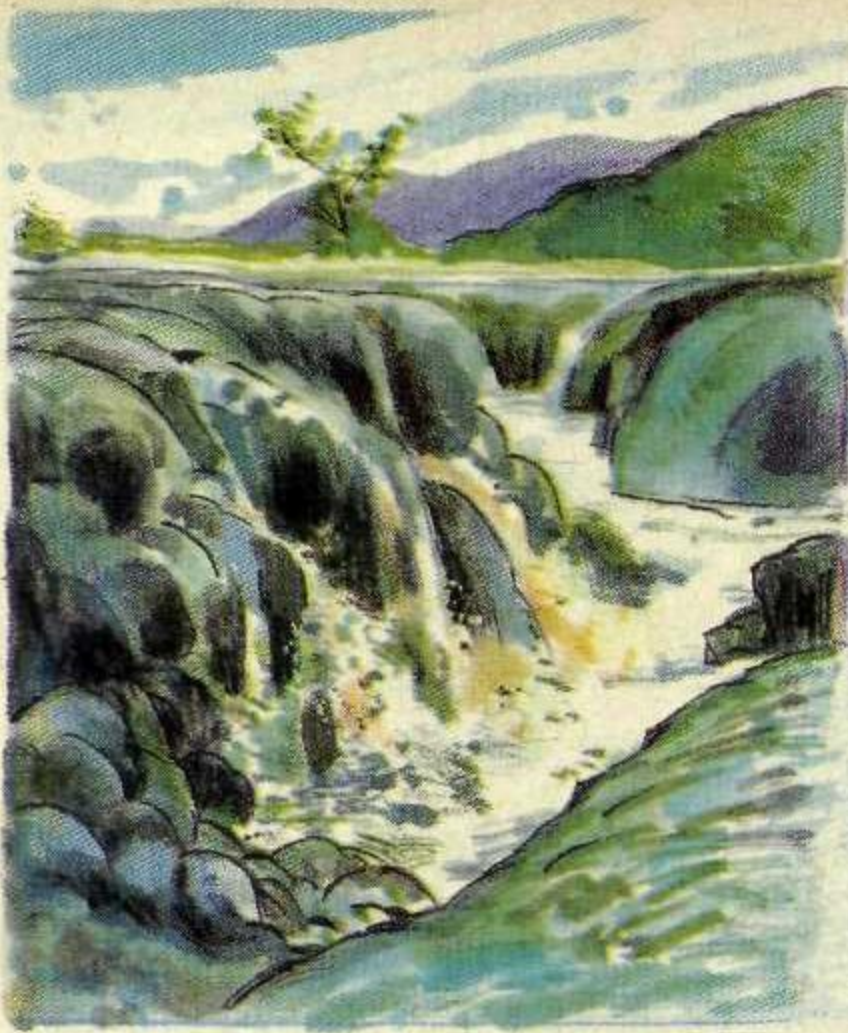
In the midst of the swiftly-flowing river is a rocky recessed pool, locally known as *Hannadu Chakra*. Any object that falls into this whirlpool is believed to go round twelve times before being sucked out of sight beneath its unknown depths.

Meke Datu

About 5 km from the Arkavati *sangama* is the famed Meke Datu, Kannada for *Goat's Leap*. The Kaveri hurtles 18 m down a cleft in two pillars of rock, one of which is broken. The gap is reputedly narrow enough for a goat, and a very nimble one at that, to jump across to the other side!

From Meke Datu, the river turns southwards, forming a natural boundary between Karnataka's Mysore-Bangalore





Hogenakkal Falls

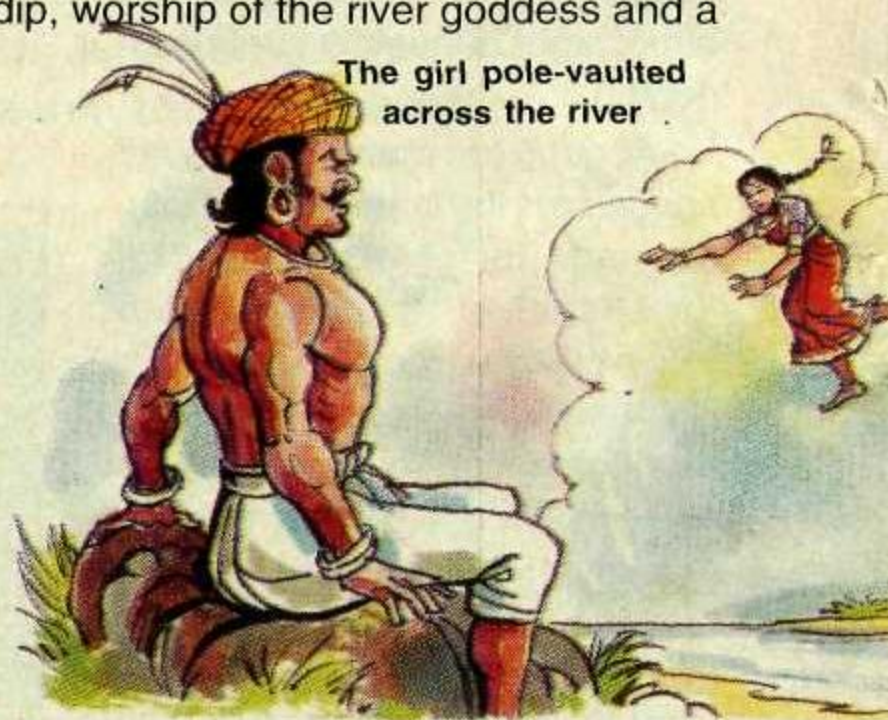
Jnanatirtha and is popular with bathers for whose safety, railings and cables have been provided. Thousands of people assemble to bathe here on the festive occasion of *Adi Padinattu*, the 18th day of August and the full moon day of *Aipasi* (October-November). The festival is especially beloved to the Tamils everywhere in the state, who spend the whole day picnicking by the riverside. The entire family is taken along for the event, which includes a holy dip, worship of the river goddess and a feast of the myriad varieties of rice which only a Tamil can enjoy – including coconut, lemon, tamarind and the ubiquitous *thayir saadam* (curd rice)!

Above the bathing ghat is the Deseswaraswami Temple, where the sage who is inextricably linked with the Kaveri's fortunes, Agastya, is believed to have prayed.

At Hogenakkal, the traditional and favoured form of Transport used for negotiating the river and viewing the thunderous waters from up close, is the coracle or *harigolu*. The coracle is a large, circular basket-shaped boat woven out

and Tamil Nadu's Dharmapuri-Salem districts plunging through the hills and dales of the Melagri range of mountains. Thirty kilometers on, the Kaveri takes another mighty tumble, in Hogenakkal, in the Thoppur Hills of Tamil Nadu. Hogenakkal means 'Smoking Stone.' Here the river breaks into two streams, the western one falling down a height of 22 m into a yawning chasm. The impact of water on rock is so great, that the water is pulverized into a fine smoke-like spray which envelops the surrounding area.

The eastern half of the river flows into two channels, one of which enters a narrow gorge resembling Meke Datu. This spot is called



The girl pole-vaulted across the river



Coracle or harigolu

the display, suddenly challenged the girl to pole vault across the river to his side. The young lady landed plum on the chieftain's lap with one graceful leap! The Rajah of Mysore was so incensed with this misbehaviour in a sacred *tirtha* that he ordered the offending chieftain to be severely punished as a warning to the tribe.

Hogenakkal is an angler's delight. The fish called *mahseer* is available in abundance in its waters. These fish grow to a huge size, some weighing more than 50 kilos! The shoals used to be immense at one time, but pollution has reduced their number.

The Kaveri now drops southwards and widens to a broader expanse. It is harnessed right at its entrance point in Tamil Nadu by the Mettur Dam, about 50 km downstream from Hogenakkal. The brilliant British engineer, Arthur Cotton, had envisaged the dam in 1834. But the plan for the dam took concrete shape only in 1910. Work on the Mettur dam began in 1928. It was completed in a record six years, with the help of electricity supplied by Mysore.

The Mettur dam is 1,590 m long, 51 m wide and 64.2 m high. It was the largest masonry dam in the world at the time of its construction and the reservoir created was one of the largest man-made lakes covering about 60 sq. km. It was named Stanely

of cane, its bottom covered with tarpaulin. It can accommodate up to seven persons and there is a whole armada of them waiting to ferry eager tourists for a small fee. The boatman uses a small paddle to manoeuvre the coracle in the river, which flows between craggy cliffs on one side and forest-covered hills on the other.

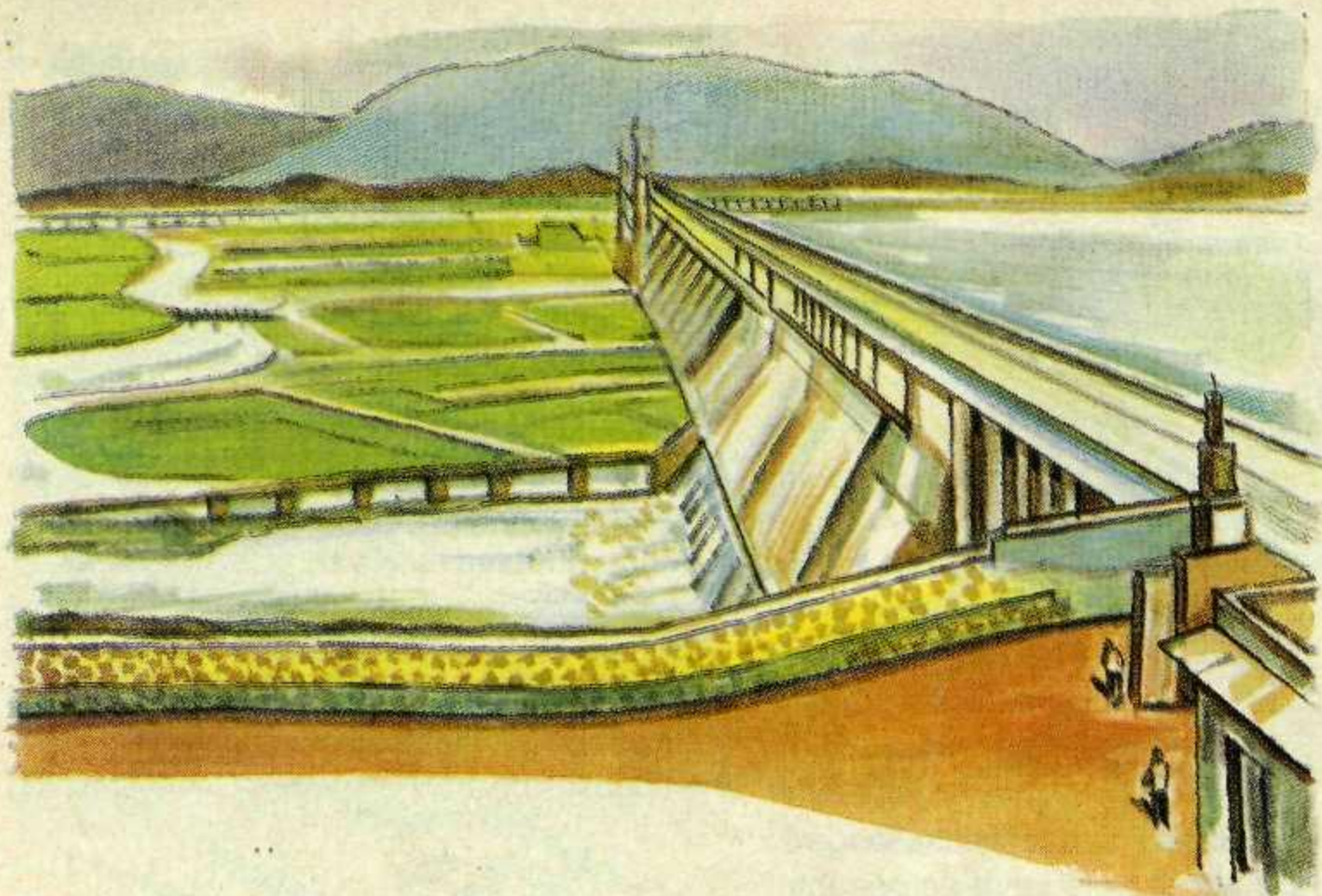
Just at the foot of the cascade, a tributary called the Chinnar joins the Kaveri from the north. It is also known as Sanatkumara Nadi since the well it originates in was supposed to have been constructed by the sage Sanatkumara.

A local legend about the spot tells of a tribal chief called Irubala Naicken who made himself a swing on the right bank of the river. A young girl was performing acrobatic feats on a pole on the opposite bank. The chief who was watching



Mahseer fish found in the Kaveri





Mettur Dam

Lake after the then Governor-General Sir George Stanley. A hydro-electric station at the toe of the dam generates 36,000 kw of power.

In times of drought, like the one in 1952, the water level in the reservoir goes down till it is barely 8 or 9 m in height. In 1975, there was an unprecedented drought and in the waterless dam site, there stood revealed a portion of a submerged Pandyan shrine.

The Kaveri forms a boundary between Salem and Periyar districts. In Salem, a river which arises in the Shevaroy Hills to the north, the Tirumanimuttar, flows through the town and joins the Kaveri in the south at Namakkal. The name *muttar* (Tamil for river of pearls) many be derived from the fact that pearls used to be found at one time on river bed. The large, lustrous pearl that adorns the idol of the goddess in the Shiva temple in the main town is believed to have been retrieved from the Tirumanimuttar. Today, the river has become a stagnant stream, a virtual sewer choked with garbage and industrial effluents. It is only in the monsoon that the river overflows washing the streets of Salem with murky water.

Salem is well-known as a weaving centre and for its stainless steel industry. Its bedsheets and *zari*-edged white *dhotis* are renowned throughout southern India. And who has not heard of the beautiful hill-station of Yercaud situated in the Shevaroy hill ranges looming above Salem town? The weather in Yercaud is so cool even in the height of summer, that one is not prepared for the searing heat of the plains below.

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STORY OF THE MAHABHARATA

(The story so far: The Kaurava warriors come to the help of Lord Bhishma and encircle Arjuna. Angered at this, Lord Krishna dashes off to kill Bhishma. But Arjuna reminds Him of His decision to remain neutral, and assures Him that he would himself destroy all the Kauravas. Listening to Sanjaya's account of the day's battle, King Dhritharashtra wails: "Is there no way by which the Kauravas can win over the Pandavas?")

Sanjaya was frank in his reply: "O King! The Pandavas only rely on their own superior strength. Besides, virtue protects them, whereas your sons are steeped in evil. They have all along turned a deaf ear to good advice. They'll only perish. You, too, scorned all warnings. Lord Bhishma, Drona, and I did our best to dissuade you from this dangerous war. Duryodhana was speechless when he heard Lord Bhishma's reply to his query."

He then described the incident. 'How is it that with such great warriors like You, Drona, and Kripa, we're unable to defeat the Pandavas?'

Duryodhana asked of Bhishma. He replied bluntly. 'Duryodhana, I repeat what I've said a thousand times before. Make peace with the Pandavas, and you'll live happily. If you persist in your course, you'll all die. So long as Lord Krishna is on their side, no one can crush the Pandavas.' And he narrated a story: 'A long while ago, all the Gods called on Brahma on Mount Gandhamadana. When a brilliantly lit chariot was seen in the sky, Brahma hastily got up and bowed, and all the gods followed suit. Brahma said, "O Protector, be born in the race of the Yadavas."





“So be it,” echoed a celestial voice from the chariot. The vehicle suddenly disappeared in a blinding flash. The gods asked Brahma: ‘Lord, who was that?’ ‘That was Lord Vishnu’, said the Creator. ‘The Titans and demons who have ravaged the world a long time ago have been reborn on earth. Now only the Naranarayanans can destroy them again, to lessen the endless burden of the earth.’ Duryodhana, in your previous birth, you might have been a terrible Titan. That’s why Lord Krishna and Arjuna are against you.”

Duryodhana went back to his tent in a towering rage.

On the fifth day of the battle, Sathyaki was attacked by Drona. Bhishma and Salya lent support to him,

while Bhima rushed to Sathyaki’s aid. In another part of the battlefield, Arjuna with one barb split open Aswatthama’s armour. But Drona’s redoubtable son carried on relentlessly.

Meanwhile, Sathyaki worked havoc on the Kaurava forces. His sons went to help him but were beaten back by Boorisvara. Though the battle raged long and fierce, neither side could claim victory.

On the sixth day, the Pandavas adopted the Makara formation against the Kaurava’s Krauncha. Bhima and Drona fought each other like ferocious tigers. Drona lost his charioteer. Undaunted, he drove his chariot forward and rained arrows on Bhima. When the younger Kauravas encircled Bhima in an effort to capture him, the Pandava colossus leaped down from his chariot and, twirling his gigantic mace above his head, fell on them like a thunderbolt and scattered them like chaff. Dhristadyumna dashed to his assistance. Bhima, covered by the gore of his enemies, looked terrible indeed. The Kauravas were determined to kill Bhima and Dhristadyumna and pressed their attack pointedly against the duo. Duryodhana tried every trick to trap Bhima, but the latter eluded all attempts to snare him, and went about slaughtering the Kaurava warriors remorselessly.

Duryodhana redoubled his efforts to destroy Bhima. When the two came



face to face, Bhima took the offensive and destroyed Duryodhana's chariot. Kripa, noticing Duryodhana's plight, brought his chariot around and pulled him inside.

At the onset of twilight, the battle was stopped. Yudhisthira was all praise for the valour shown by Bhima and Dhristadyumna.

A weary and tired Duryodhana went to Lord Bhishma once again. "Grandfather, our formations are easily being destroyed by the Pandavas. Bhima has frustrated all my efforts to capture him. How then can we defeat the Pandavas?"

Bhishma replied calmly: "Duryodhana, we're doing our best to help you. The Pandavas have many great warriors on their side. It is not an easy task to win over them."

Duryodhana was somewhat mollified. "True, the Pandavas have several great warriors on their side. I had noticed that they were wilting under your attack. If the battle continues like this, we should soon be able to reduce the strength of the enemy."

Bhishma said pointedly: "Duryodhana, there are great warriors on our side, too. Our cavalry and elephant corps are massive in strength and power. Even if Lord Indra were to descend from the heavens and fight with the Pandavas, he will not be able to win over them. I'm, therefore, not too sure about winning this war for you."



Duryodhana was irked by Bhishma's feeling of difference. He retraced his steps with a heavy heart.

On the seventh day of the great war, Bhishma formed his armies in the shape of a Mandala. The massed corps of elephants, horses, chariots, and foot-soldiers presented a solid phalanx. Yudhisthira formed his troops like a thunderbolt.

The two armies advanced to meet each other, and the Kauravas concentrated on attacking Arjuna. The arrows flew fast and thick, and Arjuna found it hard to resist the determined onslaught. Falling back a pace, he fitted the Indra bolt to his bow. The furious flame struck a shattering blow on the Kauravas, whose soliders rolled on the





ground in agony. A general panic seized the Kauravas and they began to retreat in wild disarray. Lord Bhishma, in order to stem the rout, raced towards Arjuna.

In another part of the field, Drona charged at King Virata and his son Sanka, who fell down mortally wounded. Virata was forced to flee for his life. Aswatthama fought Sikhandi and succeeded in killing his charioteer. He rose to ward off the blows from Aswathama, but soon his sword broke, and he had to retreat.

Sathyaki was locked in a duel with Alambasa, one of the Titans. A skilful wizard, he dazzled Sathyaki with his tricks of illusion. Wanting to put an end to them, he used the Indra bolt on him.

Badly wounded, Alambasa disappeared from the field.

Duryodhana and Dhristadyumna fought a fierce battle. The latter lost his chariot. Trembling with rage, he swung his sword and rushed at Duryodhana, who was saved by Shakuni. Kritavarama succeeded in inflicting severe wounds on the Pandavas. Enraged at this, Bhima hurled his mace, and demolished Kritavarma's chariot. He quickly got into the chariot of Virushaka and resumed the fight, but had to fall back before the fury of Bhima who battered his way through the Kaurava ranks.

Nakula and Sahadeva engaged Salya in a fight. As he was their maternal uncle, they spared his life but killed his horses. Salya was wounded severely.

All over the Pandava warriors roamed victorious, and the battlefield echoed their joyous cries. The Kauravas sank back disheartened at the way the battle was going against them.

Meanwhile, Abhimanyu destroyed the chariots of Chitrasena, Vikarna, and Durmarshana. This brought more Kauravas to the fray, but Arjuna, on seeing the lad's lonely plight, ran to his side and showered his arrows on the enemies.

Susarma began an attack on Arjuna, but he was soon put to flight. Then Arjuna, Yudhisthira, Bhima, Nakula and Sahadeva attacked Bhishma, but

the old Patriarch stood firm against their combined thrust. Yudhisthira turned to Sikhandi: "You had said you would kill Bhishma, but have you seen what a mighty fighter he is? Are you afraid of him now?" Shikhandi was stung by these words. He shot his arrows at Bhishma, but Salya went to his aid and successfully blunted the attack. Bhishma, with one well flighted arrow, broke Yudhisthira's bow in two. At that he fell back in fear.

Bhima swung his mace and struck viciously at Saindhava. When Duryodhana came up to help Saindhava, Bhima turned his attention on him and the two sworn enemies tried to force each other to submission. It looked as though Duryodhana would be killed. Chitrasena arrived in the nick of time and rescued him.

As the evening shadows lengthened, the toll of lives on both sides was terrible to behold. However, the casualties on the Kaurava side were more and there was great mourning in their camps.

Next day, Bhishma led the Kaurava forces in a frontal attack on the Pandavas. Of the five Pandava princes, only Bhima could stand up to him. He fought on until Bhishma's charioteer was struck down.

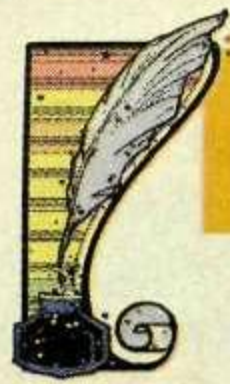
Duryodhana ran to Bhishma and angrily exclaimed: "Grandfather, Bhima goes on killing all my brothers and yet you do nothing. Why do you treat me so?"

Bhishma kept his cool. "Duryodhana, I too have eyes to see. But this I had expected. You wanted us to join in this war. Drona and I, we are only doing our duty. Why don't you quell Bhima's rampage with your own mighty powers?"

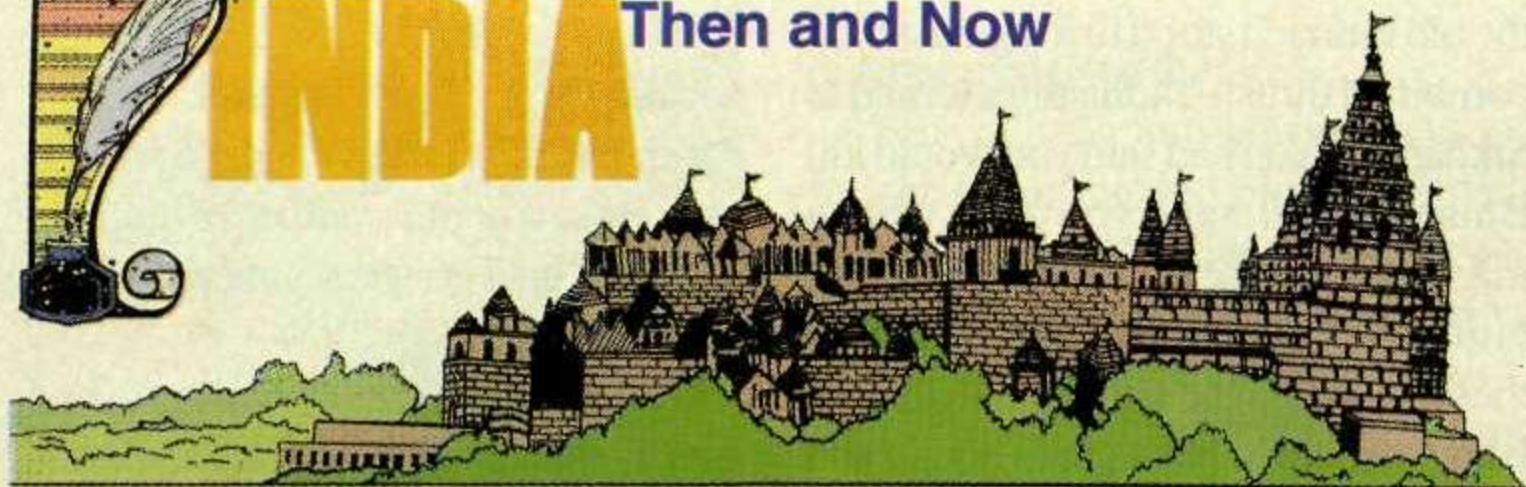
When the sun reached its zenith, the war intensified. The Kauravas fought on gamely, and even scored a few successes. For every Kaurava warrior who fell to Bhima's weapons, Drona killed one Pandava warrior, and the tally of those killed rose high on both sides.

(To continue)





INDIA Then and Now



Indraprastha, City of the Pandavas (An artist's impression)

SEVEN LIVES OF DELHI

Indraprastha - the charming magical city built by Mayadanava for the Pandavas of the Mahabharata was the first city to have come up on the site where we find the sprawling modern New Delhi, the capital of India, the world's largest democracy.

Indraprastha belonged to mythical times. No trace of it remains. Probably the river Jumna had changed its course several times, washing away or burying the ancient habitation. But, legends say, through the ages five more cities came up on the site. The present New Delhi is the seventh one.

Is that why the place is called Delhi - from *Dhili* in Hindi, meaning loose? People of an older generation used to

say that underneath the city was the head of Vasuki, the serpent-king. From time to time the majestic serpent slightly changed the position of his head. That resulted in earthquakes. Cities tumbled down!

But that is only a tale. The history of Delhi has been marked by wars and invasions. Destructions have followed new constructions.

Historically, the earliest known city on this place was built by Anangpal, a Rajput prince. That was in the 8th century. His fort was known as Lalkot. Later the Chauhan kings ruled from the city. The most famous among them was Prithviraj, heroic and chivalrous. He loved Samyukta, the princess of



Just as a fool dressed well may look distinguished from a distance, so also a fool can pass on as learned in an assembly as long as he keeps his mouth shut.

—Chanakya



Kanauj, and she loved him. But Jaichandra, the king of Kanauj, would not let them marry. He convened a *Swayamvar* for his daughter. That was an assembly of princes. Samyukta was to garland the prince of her choice.

Instead of inviting Prithviraj, Jaichandra installed a figure which looked like him, as the gate-keeper to the hall. But Samyukta was much more than a match for her father. She walked straight through the rows of princes and garlanded that figure. From the crowd stepped forward Prithviraj himself. The two galloped away before anybody could comprehend the situation.

Prithviraj and Samyukta were married. That was in 1175.

In 1192 Muhammad Ghuri, a Turkish Sultan from Ghur, attacked Delhi, but was defeated by Prithviraj, who mercifully spared him his life and allowed him to escape. But, Ghuri returned next year and, with Jaichandra's help, defeated Prithviraj and killed him.

Alas, the very next year Ghuri killed his ally, Jaichandra, and took over his

kingdom. But Ghuri himself was stabbed to death by some rebels before long.

The most famous of the dynasties which ruled Delhi were the Mughals. The British shifted their capital to Delhi in 1911. The independence of India was announced from Delhi in 1947.

The city has innumerable historical monuments, attractive and educative to all.

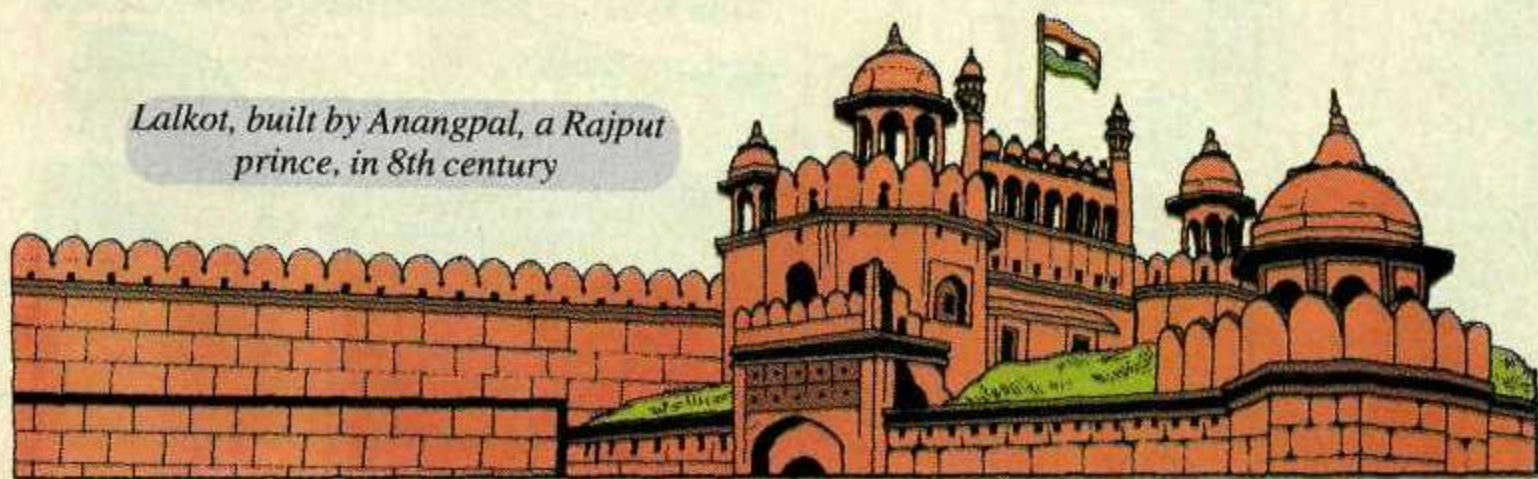
The modern Delhi - New Delhi—has an area of 1,483 sq. km. Its population today is about 95 lakhs. The languages mostly spoken are Hindi, Punjabi and Urdu, apart from English.

The city has a separate status as the National Capital Territory. It has a legislative assembly with 70 members and a council of Ministers.

Delhi is not only the capital of India, it is the commercial nerve-centre of Northern India, with numerous industries in and around it.

There are also several universities and seats of learning, old and new, in the city. New Delhi throbs with political and cultural activities.

Lalkot, built by Anangpal, a Rajput prince, in 8th century



HOW TO LEAD HOME A COW

Ramballav was in need of a milch cow, for, his little grand daughter needed milk.

As there was no such cow on sale in his own village or in the surrounding villages, he was obliged to walk a long way to the weekly cattle market.

It was a big market and on sale were hundreds of cows. Ramballav spent hours in choosing the one which at last appeared to him as the best cow available. She looked healthy and she had a handsome calf.

By the time Ramballav finished bargaining and concluding the deal, the sun had set and both buyers and sellers had begun to disperse. Ramballav hoped to find one or two known people who would be going in the direction of his village. But it so happened that nobody from his area had visited the market on that particular day.

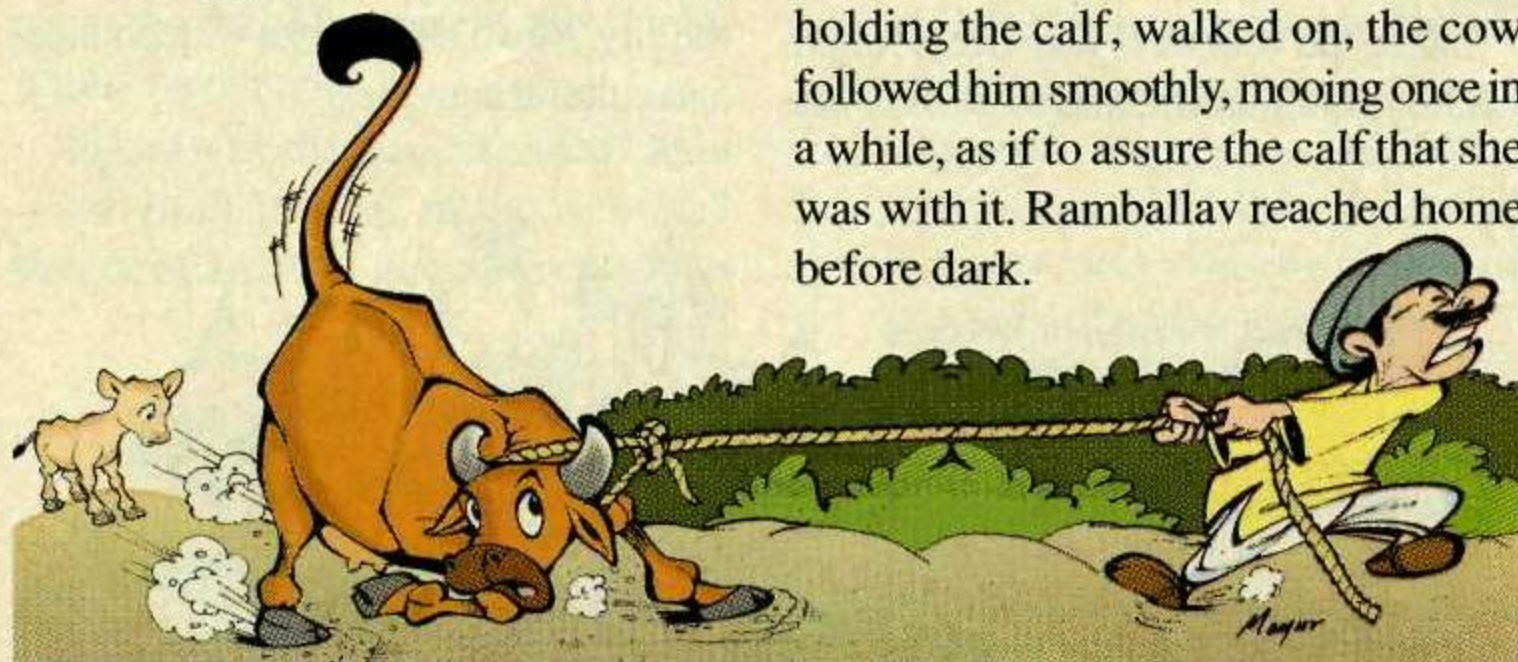
He dragged the cow along, but as

he proceeded, the cow proved more and more stubborn in resisting his pull. A time came when she refused to budge. Ramballav was no longer young. He sweated and panted dragging the cow or pushing it.

It was already evening. He did not know if he could make it to home at that pace even by midnight. He regretted aloud for having bought the cow.

“My friend, there is a simple solution to your problem,” said a passer-by, a mendicant.

Ramballav, gasping for breath, looked at the mendicant. The mendicant picked up the little calf and held it to his bosom and the cow at once began to follow him. Ramballav was amazed at the cow’s docile conduct. After five minutes the mendicant handed over the calf to Ramballav. There was no problem thereafter. As Ramballav, holding the calf, walked on, the cow followed him smoothly, mooing once in a while, as if to assure the calf that she was with it. Ramballav reached home before dark.



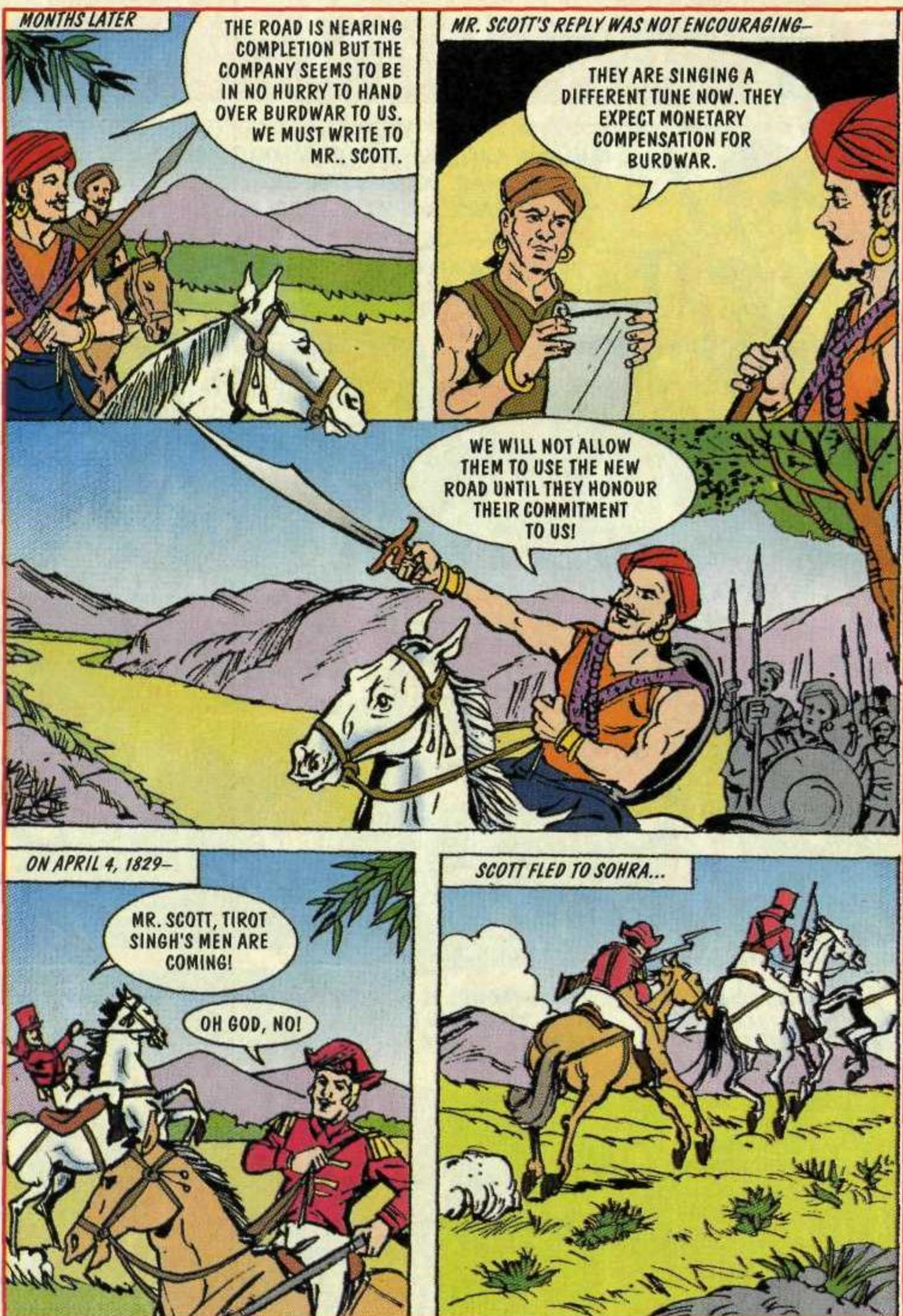
T IROT SINGH

Text : MEERA UGRA
Artist : GOUTAM SEN

YEAR: 1826. PLACE: THE PALACE OF THE KHASI RULER OF NONGKHLAW IN THE NORTHEAST. THE REGENT FOR THE MINOR KING, TIROT SINGH, IS IN CONFERENCE WITH SOME VILLAGE ELDERS.



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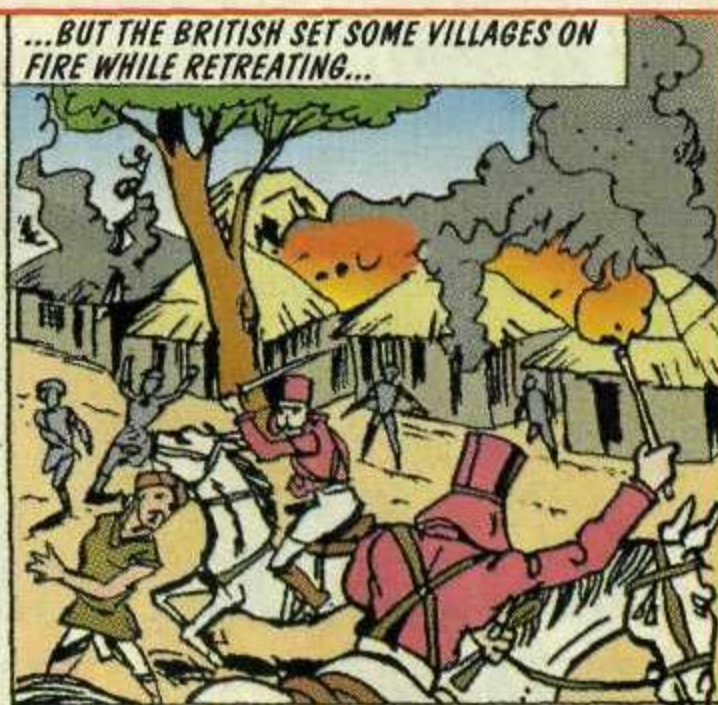


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...AND SUMMONED HELP FROM SYLHET AND ASSAM. THE KHASIS ROUTED THE BRITISH TROOPS...



...BUT THE BRITISH SET SOME VILLAGES ON FIRE WHILE RETREATING...

SOME WEEKS LATER, CAPTAIN LISTER SUCCEEDED IN OCCUPYING NONGKHLAW. TIROT SINGH FLED TO A FOREST NEAR BY.

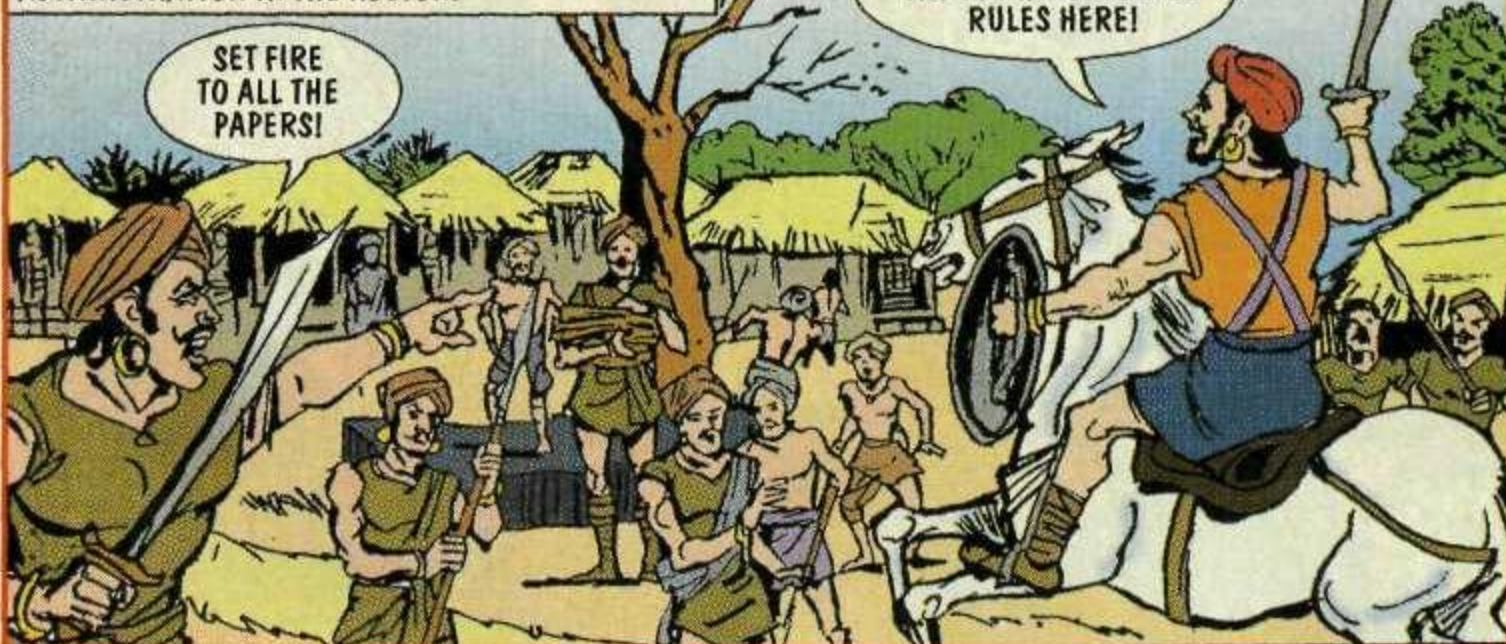


THIS IS JUST THE BEGINNING OF OUR FIGHT!

TIROT SINGH MANAGED TO GET THE SUPPORT OF SEVERAL KHASI CHIEFTAINS. ON JANUARY 9, 1831, THEIR COMBINED FORCES ATTACKED BUNGONG...



...AND FOR NEARLY A MONTH PARALYZED THE BRITISH ADMINISTRATION IN THE REGION.



LET'S SHOW THE PHIRANGEES WHO RULES HERE!

SET FIRE TO ALL THE PAPERS!

THE BRITISH TURNED TO DIPLOMACY AND SUCCEEDED IN WINNING THE OTHER RAJAS TO THEIR SIDE. SING MANIK OF SHILLONG TRIED TO PERSUADE TIROT SINGH TO GIVE UP FIGHTING.



YOU'RE RIGHT! WE'VE FOUGHT THEM FOR THREE YEARS. MY PEOPLE ARE BEHIND ME. BUT I CANNOT ALLOW THEM TO SUFFER DISEASE, DESTRUCTION AND DEATH ANY LONGER.



TIROT SINGH SURRENDERED ON JANUARY 13, 1833—



HE WAS TRIED AT GUWAHATI. THE COURT SENTENCED HIM TO LIFE IMPRISONMENT.



HE WAS SENT TO DHAKA AND KEPT UNDER HOUSE ARREST. ONE DAY, A BRITISH EMISSARY APPROACHED HIM, AND—



TIROT SINGH, YOUR PEOPLE REFUSE TO HAVE ANY OTHER REGENT AS LONG AS YOU ARE ALIVE. AGREE TO OUR TERMS, AND YOU'LL BE REINSTATED.

NO, SIR! I CHOOSE TO DIE IN THIS PRISON LIKE A KING RATHER THAN GO BACK TO MY COUNTRY AND SIT ON THE THRONE LIKE A SLAVE.



TIROT SINGH DIED AT DHAKA IN JANUARY, 1834

END

THE BERMUDA TRIANGLE

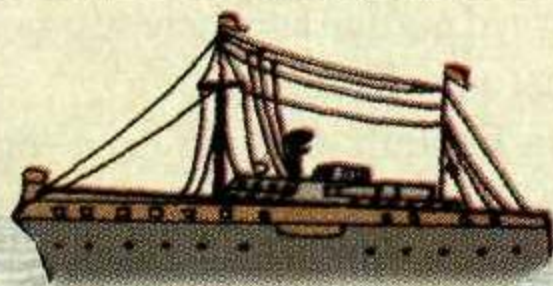
Where ships and planes simply vanish!

It was a warm, friendly Wednesday afternoon, December 5, 1945 when *Flight 19*, a group of 5 U.S. Avenger torpedo bombers, took off on a routine training exercise. Shortly afterwards, sending some bizarre radio messages, they just disappeared and were never seen again. A *Martin* flying boat, with 13 seasoned airmen was at once sent on a search-and-rescue mission. Seven minutes later, believe it or not, she too vanished!

These incredible disappearances are reported to have occurred over a sunlit stretch of water in the North Atlantic Ocean known as the Sargasso Sea. For the past two centuries, since records

were kept, on this comparatively small patch of the ocean, like magic a hundred ships and aircraft and more than a thousand people have disappeared. Yes, they have all disappeared very silently indeed and with alarming regularity, without a murmur of distress, nor leaving behind any trace whatever and often amidst excellent weather conditions.

This deadly region which attracted worldwide attention after the loss of *Flight 19*, has come to be known as the Bermuda Triangle. For, its circumference forms an imaginary triangle with Bermuda as the apex and Puerto Rico and the coast of Florida as the two base angles, covering a surface of approximately 300,000 square miles of open sea. Some





researchers have extended the area much further naming it the *Devil's Triangle* and the *Limbo of the Lost*.

The recorded list of losses begins with the *USS Pickering* and her crew of 90 disappearing on 20 August, 1800, and continues till as recent past as the early seventies when the *Anita*, a 20,000-ton freighter was found missing together with her crew of 32 in 1973.

In 1918, a similar vessel, *USS Cyclops*, the 19,000 tonne collier, the size of two football fields, simply vanished without any warning with 300 people on board. Rescuers found no trace at all of this sailing giant.

"Weather and performance excellent. Expect to arrive on schedule," radioed the *Star Tiger*, a luxury British South American airliner, as it neared its destination. Alas, it never arrived! In early 1948, with 25 passengers and 6 crew members, the plane mysteriously disappeared with no call for help!

An unusual event took place in this region in 1966. The weather was fine

and the sea calm. A tugboat called *Good News* was towing an empty barge under Captain Don Henry. Suddenly he had the weirdest experience of his life. The compass began to spin like a top. The water, the sky and the horizon seemed to blend together. Then as a great fluffy white cloud engulfed the vessel, its electrical power failed and the sea turned choppy and choppy. The tugboat was being pulled backwards towards the cloud as the Captain put all his strength to move it forward. He said later, it felt as if "being pulled in two directions at the same time". Finally, when the boat emerged out of the fog, all turned normal and there was no sign of mist anywhere.

An Eastern Airliner on a regular flight vanished all of a sudden from the radar for 10 full minutes when flying over this area. Then as rescue operations were being launched the plane mysteriously reappeared and landed safely. No one in the aircraft had experienced anything strange but they



could not explain how every clock and watch on board was found to be exactly 10 minutes behind time.

There have been also incidents in this region of sea-worthy ships found drifting in mid-ocean without a soul on them. Like *Rosalie* in 1840 and the brigantine, *Mary Celeste*, in 1872. Both were deserted by their occupants who seemed to have completely vanished leaving behind extra clothing, food, water and even valuable objects. Where did they all go? How did they go and why? There are yet no answers!

Are strange magnetic forces responsible for the extraordinary disappearances and unusual happenings in the Bermuda Triangle? Do strong

underwater currents create a vacuum which swallows up all that move close to it on sea or in the skies? Are some curious extraterrestrial beings hijacking planes and ships and kidnapping people in order to examine and study mankind and its machines? Or do the remains of the lost continent of Atlantis, which was believed to have very advanced technologies, lie beneath this region and its super powers are still active, performing a vanishing act on our ships and aircraft from time to time? Maybe this enigmatic mystery of all times does have a very simple explanation yet unknown to man and his science!

A tall, lonely lighthouse, Gibbs Hill, stands at Bermuda. Since the 1940s it is acting as a navigational guide to the passing vessels. Who knows? It must have been in the years since then, the sole witness to the bizarre happenings in the surrounding seas and the skies! If only Gibbs Hill could speak...! (A.K.D)

Bermuda with its 300 tiny islands were discovered by Juan de Bermudez in 1515. Surprisingly, in spite of an equitable climate, plentiful provision and an ideal location for a quiet refuge, the place was shunned for almost a century after its discovery. The great voyager and discoverer, Christopher Columbus travelled through this region of Bermuda Triangle in late 15th century. He seems to have noted his ships compass beginning to function erratically and he witnessed a "great flame of fire" falling into the sea. Even our English bard, William Shakespeare has referred to these islands, "the still-vex'd Bermoothes" in his work, *The Tempest*. So since those times of yore there were some disturbances in the region and it had gained such a reputation that sailors and people feared to venture into it.





PAKISTAN: WHERE **DEMOCRACY** WEEPS

Our old good India was divided in 1947. While the major part continued to be known as India, the smaller part came to be known as Pakistan.

While India remained secular, without declaring any religion as the official religion of the country, Pakistan declared itself an Islamic republic in 1956.

At the time of independence, both the countries swore by democracy. They decided to hold regular elections and allow the people to decide who would run the government. Democracy has many weaknesses, but its greatest virtue is that the people's will prevails ultimately. From time to time they can change their rulers in a peaceful way. But if a power-hungry dictator rules the country, it is difficult to topple him without violence.

India can be proud of the fact that it has remained a secular and democratic country – in fact the largest democracy in the world. But, unfortunately, the same

is not the case with Pakistan. In 1958 Field Marshal Ayub Khan seized power, staging a coup. He changed the constitution and became the President, assuming dictatorial powers. But he met his match in General Yahya Khan who toppled him in 1969.

In 1971 the Yahya regime unleashed a brutal repression on the people of East Pakistan (formerly East Bengal and now Bangladesh). Lakhs of East Pakistani Bengalis, both Hindus and Muslims, became refugees in India. India was compelled to intervene in the affair. The Indian army marched into Dacca with the support of the local people, and the Pakistani army was humbled. Free Bangladesh was thus born.

The humiliated Yahya Khan handed over power to a politician, Zulfikar Ali Bhutto. In 1977, in a situation of chaos another general, Zia-ul Haq, took over power. He promised to restore democracy soon, but went back on his word. Bhutto was accused of complicity in a murder and was hanged!



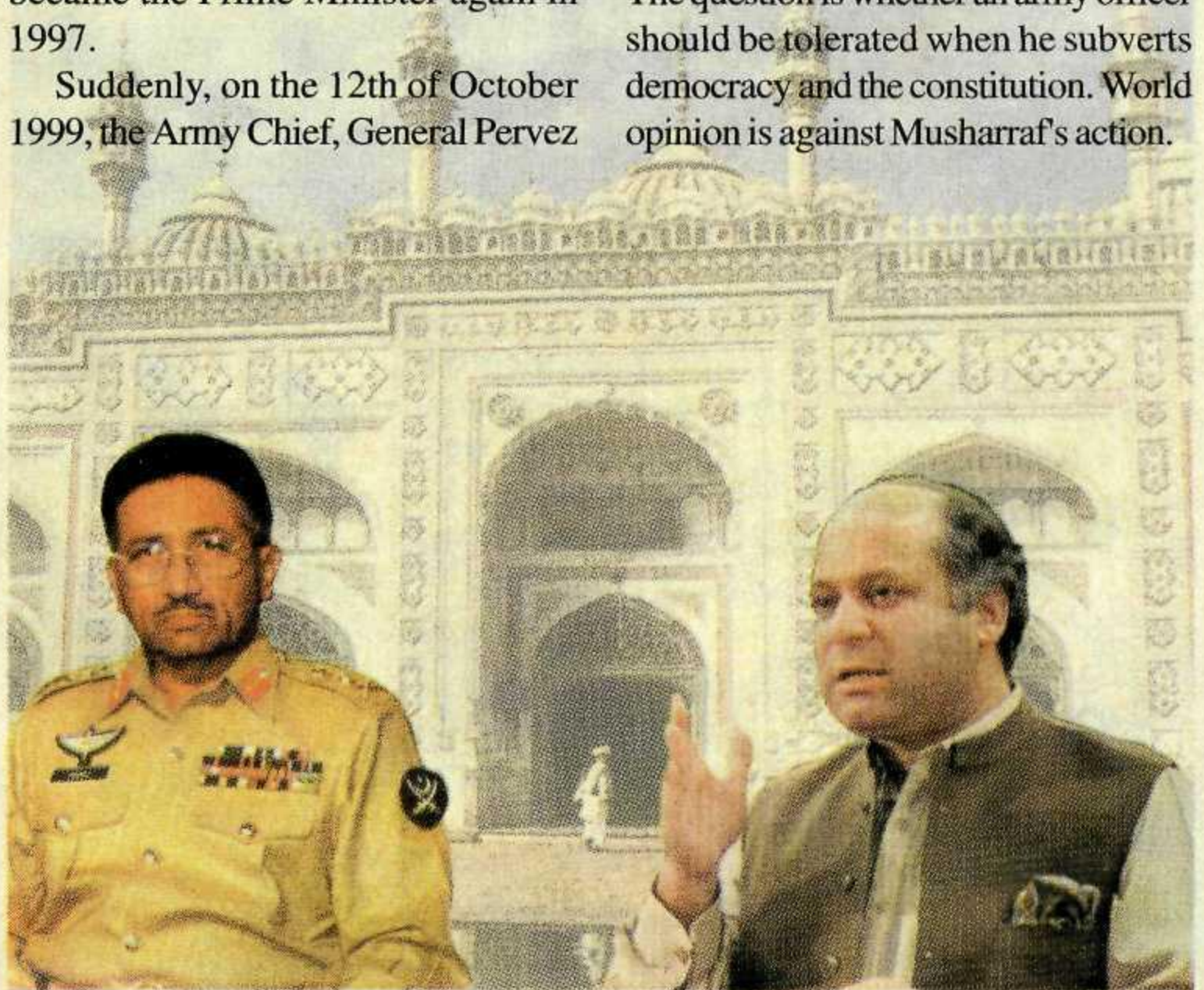
Zia-ul Haq died in a mysterious plane crash in 1988. An election took place and Bhutto's daughter, Benazir Bhutto, leader of the Pakistan People's Party, became the Prime Minister.

But her rule was short-lived. The President, Ghulam Isaq Khan, dismissed her. In the next elections (1990), Nawaz Sharif of the Islami Jamhoori Party came to power. The President dismissed him in 1993. In the election held in the same year, Benazir Bhutto's party won and she became the Prime Minister a second time. She too was dismissed and Nawaz Sharif became the Prime Minister again in 1997.

Suddenly, on the 12th of October 1999, the Army Chief, General Pervez

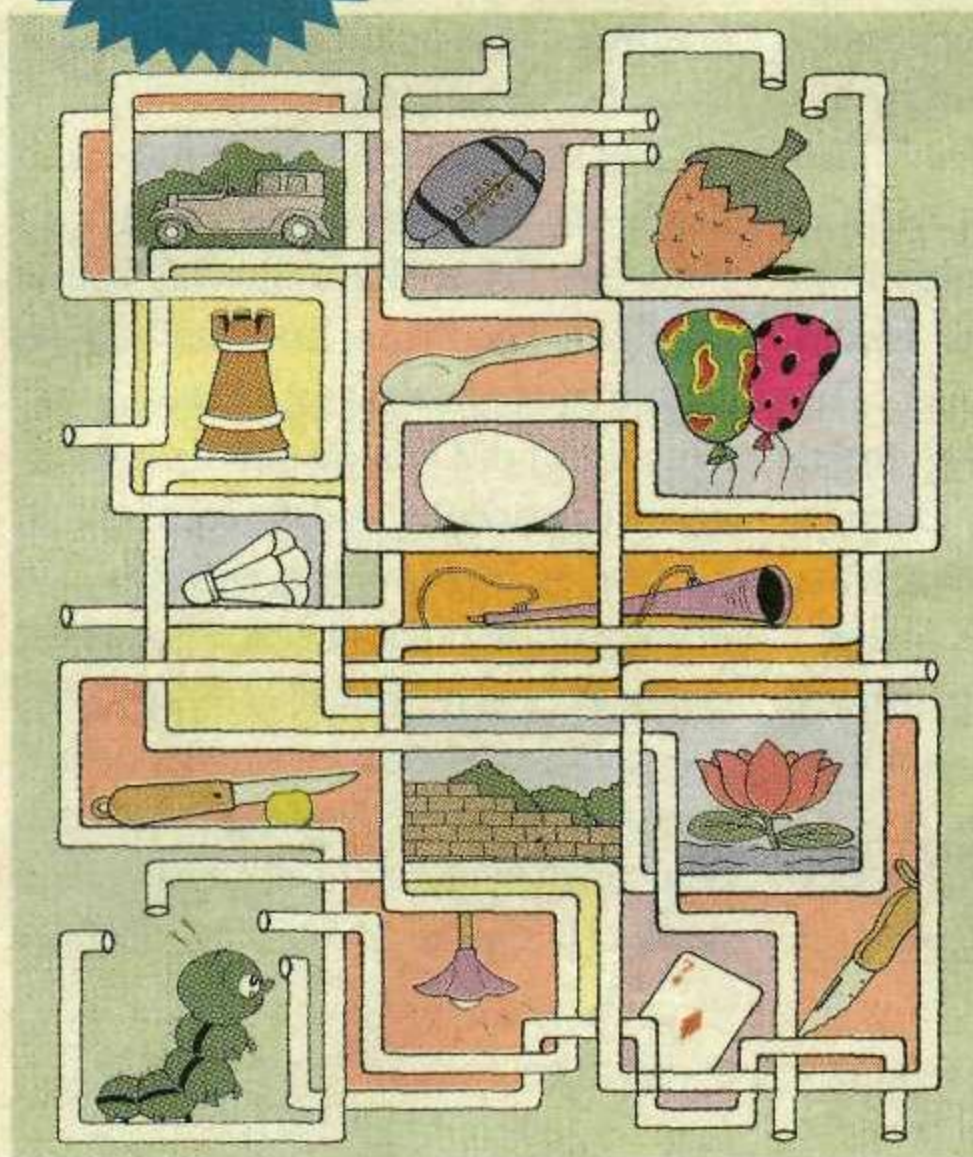
Musharraf, who had been dismissed by the Prime Minister, staged a coup and usurped power. Sharif was taken prisoner. He is being tried, accused of a number of offences.

The world leaders have not taken kindly to this abnormal change in Pakistan. What Sharif did was within his right. The Prime Minister had the authority to dismiss an officer. What Musharraf did was an act of violence against democracy and the constitution. No officer, however big, can dismiss a Prime Minister. The question is not who is a better ruler—Sharif or Musharraf. The question is whether an army officer should be tolerated when he subverts democracy and the constitution. World opinion is against Musharraf's action.



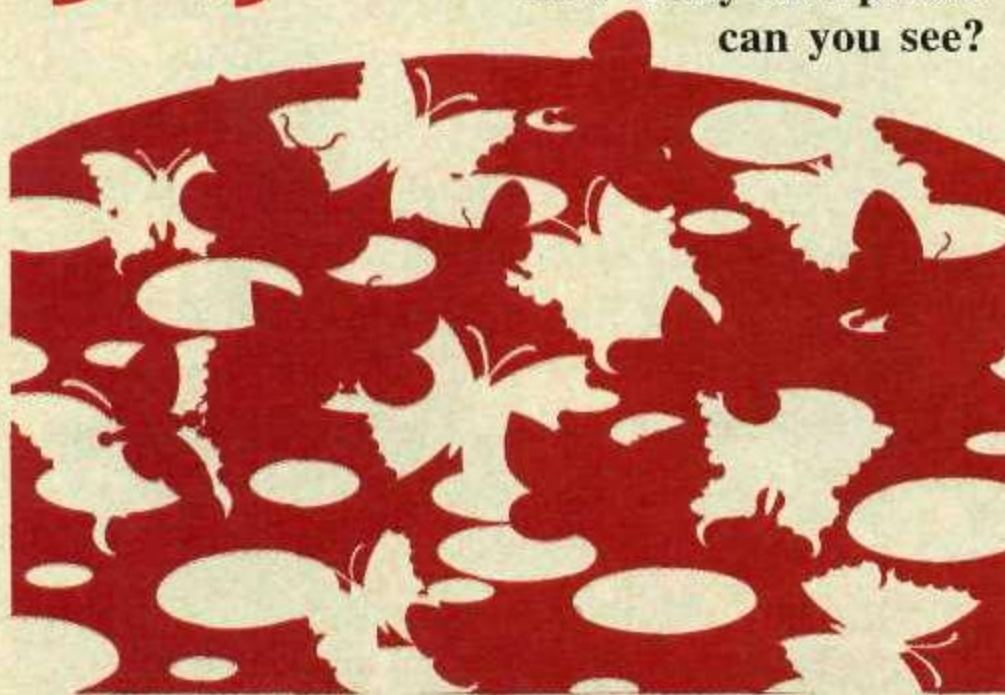
WAY MAZE

Help catty reach the cherry
on the other side!

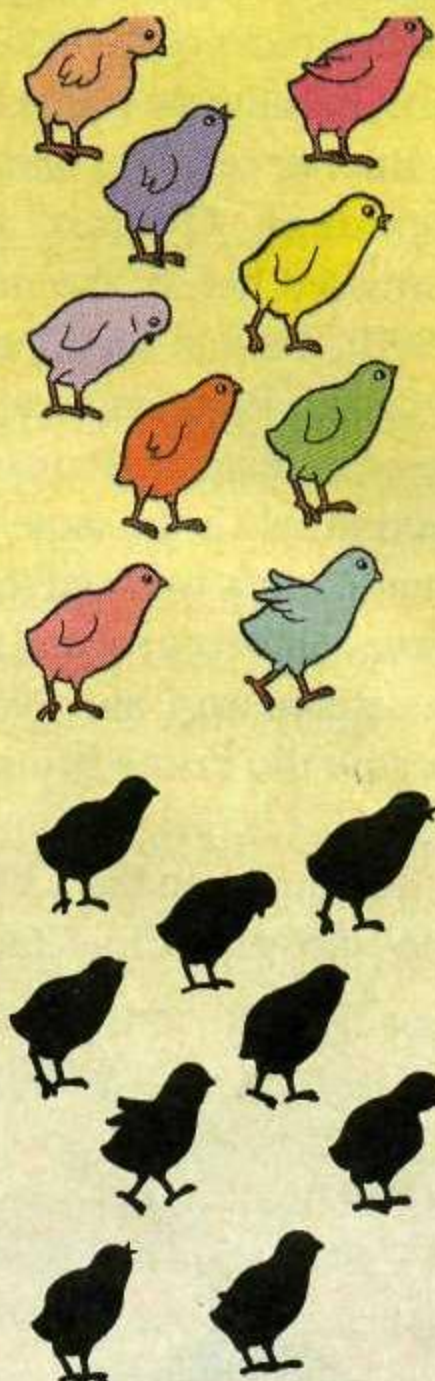


Jungle

Look closely!
How many caterpillars
can you see?



SHADOW PLAY



LET'S SHADE THE
SHADOWS WITH THEIR
CORRECT PIECES!



THE BIGGEST CAUSE OF MY UNHAPPINESS

There is a Japanese story about a young man who was never happy. "He is unhappy because he does not earn for himself and depends on others for everything," thought his friends.

They found a job for him in a restaurant. He was to sit at the reception room and direct the customers to different sections, veg or non-veg, western or eastern cuisine.

But after a month he resigned the job. "While everybody eats, I must sit gaping at them, eh? I can't!" he told his friends.

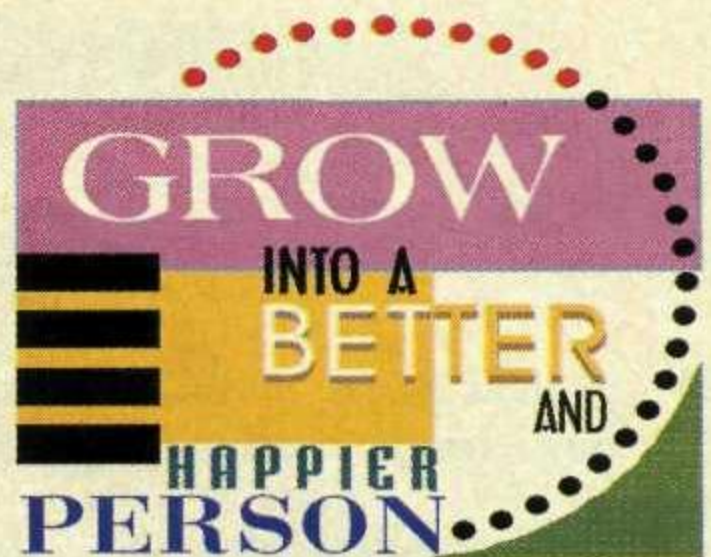
Next they found him a salesman's job in a departmental store. He stuck to it for a fortnight; then resigned.

"Everybody goes out carrying things. But I must keep on handing over different items to them and return home empty handed! I can't!" was his explanation.

After a few more trials, his friends at last found him a job as a night-guard at the cemetery.

Now he will find nobody to compare himself with and feel unhappy on that account, they were sure.

But they proved wrong. He gave up the job after a month.

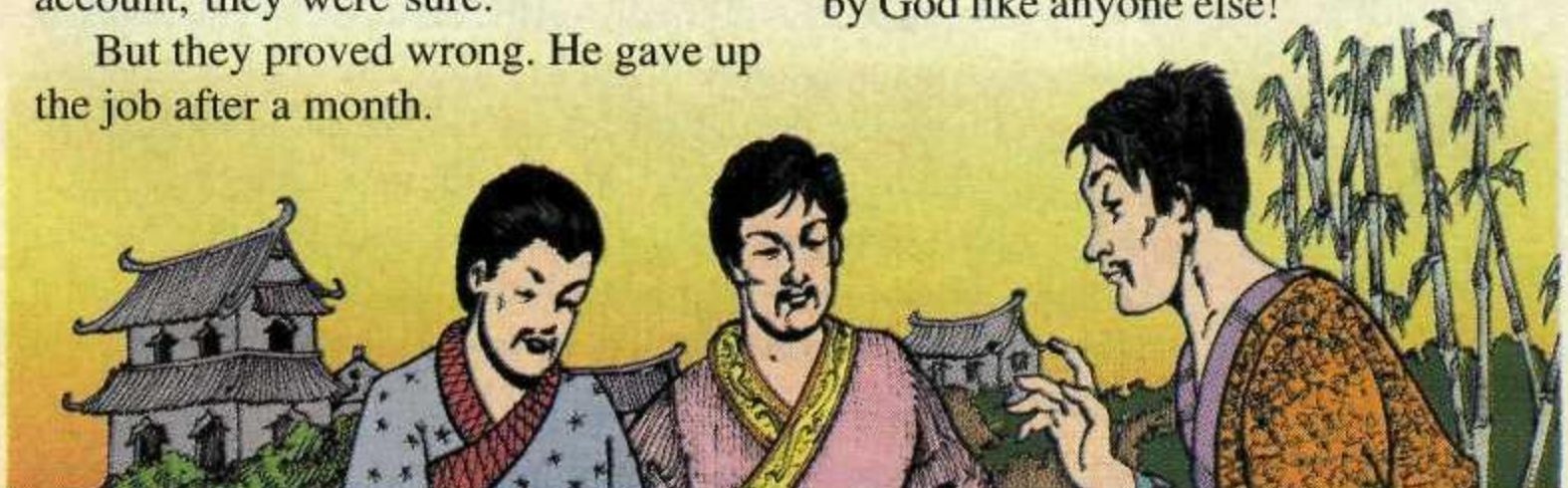


"Must I remain awake while everybody sleeps under comfortable tombs?" was his rebellious observation.

His friends gave up.

Alas, much of our suffering can vanish only if we did not compare ourselves with others. The irony is, we do not compare ourselves with those who are less fortunate, but only with those who appear to be more fortunate. (That the appearance may be deceptive is a different matter.)

The first thing to get rid of a great deal of unhappiness is to remember that each one is a unique being; each one has his or her strength and weakness. The habit of comparison is a direct opposition to nature's law! I must discover what is best in me and cultivate that. After all, I too am a creature made by God like anyone else!



LET US KNOW

- * *In most stories, the owl is described as a creature with wisdom. Is there any scientific truth in this view?*

-P. Mohandas, Nanganallur, Chennai

There is no scientific truth as such, but the owl has some special powers or characteristics. Like, it has a far better vision in the dark than what we human beings have. It has rather large eyes, and each pupil can see objects independently. As their eyes are in front of their head, the owls can judge distances more accurately. Besides, they have better hearing powers. The owl also has a flexible neck which enables it to rotate its head at a wider (270 degrees) angle. Small wonder, then, story-tellers attribute better wisdom to owls than many other birds or animals.

- * *What exactly is athlete's foot?*

-P. Sundaribai, Bhubaneswar

It is a fungus infection of the foot and is commonly seen in athletes. The infection spreads through damp feet especially if they are bereft of any footwear. At first cracks appear in the skin between the fourth and fifth toes. The skin beneath turns red and shiny. This condition may soon spread to other parts of the sole.



- * *Recently my uncle returned from the U.S.A. and found that he cannot use his electric shaver in India. Why is it so?*

-Pradeep Kumar, Nasik

Have you noticed the stamping on the cartons carrying electric bulbs used in our homes? It will be either 230 volts or 220-240 volts. The shaver brought from the U.S.A. is for use on 110 voltage, which is considered safer for the users. Any accidental shock will be less damaging than 230 voltage which is used in Britain and many of its former colonies like India. Any electric gadget marked 110 volts will not work in the electricity system adopted in India.



Towards Better English



- ❖ What is ailurophobia? queries Malathi Srinivasan of Bangalore.

Someone must have seen little Malathi running away from cats! Yes, the word refers to a fear of cats. How would she feel when she is told that Napoleon Bonaparte had suffered the same phobia?

- ❖ Samir Bhawnani of Ahmedabad wants to know the difference between *wit* and *humour*.

Any verbal expression, which is brief, deft, and deliberately contrived to produce comic surprise can be called *wit*. Whereas, *humour* can be both a comic speech, comic appearance, or mode of behaviour. To a question whether *Rom* is male or female, a witty answer is "GOK - god only knows!" And here's a bit of humour: "Did you hear about the skeleton they found among the bushes in the university? It belonged to the 1939 hide-and-seek champion!" Didn't you laugh when you watched Charlie Chaplin going through his antics? Or Laurel and Hardy come out of one of their many scrapes? Wit is invariably verbal, while humour has a broader range of understanding.

A JOKE, BUT OUT OF PLACE

Reader Jyotiranjana Biswal of Durgapur heard of his friend having been charged by the traffic police for over-speeding and jumping the red light. He went to him and while expressing sympathy, he told his friend that he should not have at any cost disregarded the traffic signal. He joked: "So, Mohan, you wanted to show how your brand new car can eat miles in a few moments?" What Jyotiranjana did not know was that his friend was going along the school zone where there is a speed limit. Mohan's father remarked: "Jyoti, you appear to be a *Job's comforter*!" Reader Biswal is not sure whether the old man was paying him a compliment or pulling his legs. The expression refers to someone who unwittingly adds to the distress of another while attempting to give sympathy.

DISCOVER, EXPRESS YOURSELF

Answers to the quiz published in this issue will appear in the next issue. Meanwhile you are welcome to send your answers to Discovery of India Quiz, Chandamama Buildings, Vadapalani, Chennai - 600 026. But to qualify as a contestant, you must also do an imaginative exercise: please read all the quotes and fillers (which appear at the bottom of several pages) in the earlier issue and tell us which one (give only the page no.) appealed to you most and why. Please do not use more than a hundred words to say this. Please write your age, the name of the educational institution and your class if you are a student, and your full address. Put down your signature below your answer and let it be certified by one of your parents or teachers.

1st Prize : Rs. 1000

2nd Prize : Rs. 500

Plus five
Congratulatory
prizes Rs. 200 each

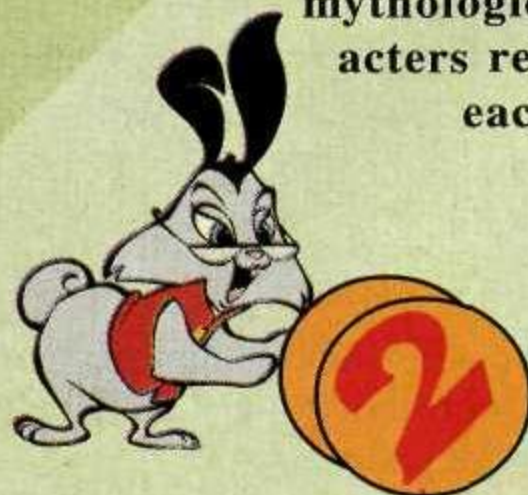


A king was kidnapped by an invader. A message was sent to the queen that the king shall be released only if she agreed to marry the invader. The queen consented and came to the invader's camp in a procession of a few hundred maids who were carried in palanquins. At the invader's camp, those who barged out of the palanquins were not maids, but soldiers.

They wrought havoc on the enemy, while the valiant queen set the king free and both escaped to their castle.

Who was the queen and who was the king in this historical legend? Who was the invader? Historically, to which century did they belong?

How are the following pairs of mythological characters related to each other?



Chandamama: one spirit in many languages:



AND BAG A REWARD



- i. Which Indian work of literature is known as the world's first anthology of fables? Who is its author?
- ii. Which Indian work of literature is believed to be the world's first compilation of fiction? Who is the author?
- iii. Which Indian work of literature is the world's first compilation of didactic, that is to say, morally or spiritually educative stories?
- iv. Which one is the most widely read Indian scripture?
- v. What are the four great chronological stages of the earliest Indian literature?



MAY I HAVE YOUR
ATTENTION
PLEASE!

CONDITIONS :

- * Employees and their families/ associates of Chandamama India Ltd., are not allowed to participate.
- * The judges' decision will be final and no correspondence will be entertained in this regard.
- * Illegible entries cannot be considered.
- * The results will be published in the April 2000 issue of Chandamama.
- * Answers should reach us on or before 31st Jan 2000.

- | | | |
|---------------|---|---------------|
| a. Bhima | – | Sisupal |
| b. Jarasandha | – | Kamsa |
| c. Bhisma | – | Vichitravirya |
| d. Aswasthama | – | Kripacharya |
| e. Vidura | – | Shukadeva |

the spirit of light and delight



PHOTO CAPTION CONTEST

Can you formulate a caption in a few words, to suit these pictures related to each other? You may write it on an ordinary post card and mail it to



PHOTOCAPTION
CONTEST

CHANDAMAMA

Vadapalani
Chennai-600 026



to reach us by the 25th of current month. A reward of Rs. 100/- will go to the best entry which will be published in the issue after the next.

CONGRATULATIONS



The Prize for the last issue goes to :

P. RUDRA BHAVANI
11/2/893 Begumpet
Hyderabad-500 001



The winning entry :

"Green leaves for you"—"Only chocolate for me"

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